

DEACCESSIONING

Any discussion of deaccession policies can quickly become heated, as the subject touches on core issues of the purpose of museums and the role they play in society.

At one extreme are those who believe that any deaccession is a violation of the public trust and will, in the long run, undermine the public's perception of our role as guardians of our shared heritage. J. Carter Brown, Director Emeritus of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., has long held this view, adding that when works given for the public benefit are sold, the museum loses control over where they go as they may be bought privately or leave the country.

Opponents of deaccessioning also point to the negative response from the press and public to recent sales of important museum works to enable institutions to increase their acquisition fund, such as the Guggenheim's \$43 million sale, in 1989, of masterworks which included works by Modigliani, Kandinsky and Chagall. The response has been equally intense to the use of the proceeds from the sale of "unimportant" works to purchase a greater work, such as the Museum of Modern Art's sale in New York of seven works (Renoir, Kandinsky, Monet, de Chirico, Mondrian and two Picassos) to buy one Van Gogh.

At the opposite end of the debate are those who contend that an appropriate exercise of stewardship involves judgement and hard decisions in upgrading and cleaning up the collection. If a museum collects local Arizona history and the collection is burdened with caring for German Expressionist prints or Medieval weapons, why should the limited resources of the museum be expended on objects which are inconsistent with the museum's collection priorities?

Anyone who has spent time in museum storerooms knows that there are *misplaced objects* in nearly every collection. These mistakes probably occur

most often because the items were collected before formal collection policies were established.

Writing (and rewriting) a collection policy can obviously prevent problems associated with deaccessioning. A few examples of the guidelines and restrictions some administrators and boards have placed in their collection policies follow:

1. If objects are to be sold, the decision must be approved by an outside committee which will serve as consultants in determining which works are no longer deemed appropriate for the collection.
2. Funds obtained from the sale of objects may be used only to purchase other works for the collection. Some may argue that it might be appropriate to use funds to pay bills if the museum is unable to keep the lights on and the doors open. However, using the proceeds from a sale to support the operating costs of the museum may serve a short-term need but it may also undermine the long-term vitality of the institution.
3. Board members and staff members may *not* purchase or acquire deaccessioned items. Keeping the sale *at arms length* helps to avoid the appearance of impropriety.
4. Only pre-determined methods of disposal are permitted. When these decisions are made in advance, the staff can make calm, well thought-out choices which are disassociated from a specific deaccession.
5. Deaccessions must be preceded by a multi-step approval process to protect the collection and increase objectivity of the decision. This is important because tastes change. Many institutions have suffered the loss of valuable objects because of shifting fashions or because

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of a curatorial change involving strong personal interests.

6. Objects must be offered and sold publicly. Institutions are advised to check with the state attorney general to see if there are special deaccession restrictions.
7. Staff and Board members are encouraged to consider giving the object to the museum's education program to use in a lending library or docent program.
8. Staff and Board are encouraged to try to give or sell the item(s) to another museum or to exchange the objects for items which are mutually beneficial to each institution. The method of exchanging can work quite well, especially in science and history museums, although the economics of selling art to financially strapped institutions in the current market tend to make sales to private individuals

at auction more attractive. When the Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis sold Frederic Church's *Home by the Lake* for \$8.25 million, it had been on long-term loan to the Minneapolis Institute of Art for many years, which the Museum simply could not raise the necessary funds to purchase it.

Deaccessioning is not a new subject. Dialogue has increased on the subject during the last twenty years with the formalization of collections management. As museum professionals struggle with the issues surrounding the disposal of collection items, we are being asked now to clarify and codify standards. If museums, as a group, are protectors of public history, then we, as caretakers, must carefully devise a mechanism for the removal of objects held in the public trust. The articles in this issue are designed to present some of the alternatives.

-Lella F. Smith, Chairperson

GET RID OF IT! PERSPECTIVES ON THE DISPOSAL OF DEACCESSIONED ITEMS

by Paulette Hennum

At a workshop I attended several years ago, it was announced that a box of deaccessioned items (costume accessories and household items of minor value) was available for the taking. While this method might seem appealing for its simplicity and speed, most of us would probably agree that it is unacceptable.

Let's begin with some general guidelines widely accepted in the museum profession.

1. **The method of disposal should be chosen based on the benefits to the institution, without compromising standards of professional ethics.** In determining the most appropriate method, consideration must also be given to the institution's responsibility to the public it serves, the public trust it embodies, its donors, and the artists or makers of works to be disposed. These interests are not always harmonious, and a tug-of-war may result. A dilemma faced by many institutions is whether to sell deaccessioned items to increase assets, or to sacrifice profits by keeping the item in the public domain via transfer to another institution.
2. **Disposal methods should be determined independently of decisions to deaccession items.** Collection items should be deaccessioned only according to the criteria in the Collection Management Policy. Items should not be deaccessioned specifically with the intention to sell them to buy another item. An effective way to discourage a correlation is to allow a discrete period of time between the two activities.
3. **Disposal methods available and authority to recommend a given method should be clearly stated in the Collection Management Policy.** The policy might even indicate which method is preferable. A mechanism for high-level approval should also be built into the policy.
4. **The nature of the object will greatly influence the choice of disposal method.** For example, concerns regarding the disposal of natural history specimens will likely differ from disposal of a work of art.

5. **Given the complex nature of museum collections,**

accept that "there is no uniformly-correct method of disposal" (Malaro 1985:147). In some cases, extreme creativity might be required in finding an appropriate disposition.

Working within this framework, I would like to evaluate professionally-accepted disposal methods and the pros and cons of each.

1. Sale at public auction

- Obtain estimates from more than one auction house to ensure best prices and service.
- Make sure your Collection Management Policy addresses purchase by staff and trustees.

In the past, when deaccession activities were rarely publicized, auction houses in a different city were preferred by many institutions to ensure anonymity and avoid negative publicity.

In today's climate, some museums view selling through local auction houses as an opportunity to educate their donors and members about disposal criteria and methods.

PROS: Offers maximum exposure of items while ensuring maximum impartiality and consequently maximum accountability. Auction houses can usually accommodate a variety of items and therefore less staff time may be required to accomplish disposal.

CONS: May not result in the highest price.

2. Sale through a reputable dealer

PROS: May result in a higher price.

CONS: Potential for accusations of favoritism or inept bargaining. May lose art works or artifacts to private collections, where they might not be available for public viewing and access by scholars might be problematic.

3. Transfer to another non-profit institution

- Usually considered when an object's monetary value is greater than its historical, cultural or scientific value or if it has more significance to another institution. Malaro (1985:148) states, "Such donations should not be perceived as a violation of the trust responsibility if, on balance, the museum gains by acquiring storage space and by being relieved of its routine maintenance expenses."

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PROS: Respects the original intent of the donor that the item remain in the public domain. Item is more likely to remain available to the public and/or scholars.

CONS: Finding an appropriate recipient institution and negotiating an object's transfer can be extremely labor-intensive. To minimize accusations of favoritism, it is essential to document why a given recipient institution is chosen. Some institutions use a *ring* method, by first considering recipient institutions in the same city, then the same county, region, etc.

4. Exchange with a dealer or non-profit institution

- While many Collection Management Policies include this method, its frequency of use is unknown.

PROS and CONS: Same issues examined for transferring to another non-profit or selling through a dealer.

5. Destruction

- Generally reserved for cases when a marginally significant item has deteriorated to such a degree that it cannot be exhibited and/or is irreparable. An irreversible act to be undertaken only in extreme circumstances.
- Should require highest level of approval provided for in the Collection Management Policy and always be documented by written justification.
- Items unequivocally found to be fakes (imitation of genuine) or forgeries (something altered) are often considered candidates for destruction although some institutions prefer to mark them and donate them to study collections or conservation labs.

There are some special considerations that must be addressed when deaccessioning works by living artists. When removing a work from your collection, be aware of the impact - positive or negative - the transaction could have on the value of an artist's work. Artists' resumes often list museums that own their work, so consider notifying artists if their works are sold, transferred or exchanged. In California, the terms of the Royalty Act of 1977 must be respected (Malaro 1985:122-125).

Certain circumstances might merit the exchange of an art work with the artist. For example, a student work might be traded for a mature one (our Collection Management Policy was recently amended to permit this). If the need to destroy a contemporary work should arise, I would *strongly* recommend working closely with the artist *and* obtaining explicit written permission from him or her, reviewed by legal counsel. While some institutions simply do not deaccession works by living artists to avoid the problems it can raise, many institutions have successfully carried out this type of deaccessioning. In my opinion, the key to success is to proceed with sensitivity and impeccable documentation.

Generally inappropriate disposal methods include: return of items to donors and sale of items in the museum shop and gift or sale to staff or trustees. The return of works to donors is usually not acceptable because a tax deduction has already been enjoyed by the donor and no reimbursement to the institution is being made. Such a transaction could be considered a

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HIDDEN TEACHER TREASURES WITHIN YOUR MUSEUM

by Karen Himes

For well over fifty years, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County has nurtured and supported an expansive outreach program, created nearly solely from deaccessioned materials. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the newly formed Education Division staff eagerly accepted materials considered *expendable* by the various curatorial sections to develop the Museum Lending Service. This checkout system made museum-quality science specimens, historical objects and models available to teachers and educators of the local Los Angeles community. Even after several program changes, the original program intent of extending the Museum into the community remains emphatic in our current program mission: *To complement the school curricula. To make available the resources and the informal learning environment of the Museum to children unable to visit the Museum or to complement the visit of a school planning a museum tour. To make students aware of the vast variety of materials on display at the Museum. To enrich the textbook-oriented education of the classroom with a tactile experience. To introduce the students to natural history and history concepts.*

CURRENT LOAN PROGRAMS

The initial Lending Service program was designed to allow individual teachers to borrow directly from the Museum's Education Division. Shortly after the inception of the Lending Service, a Classroom Collections program was developed to divert the contractual and insurance responsibilities away from the individual teachers and onto the schools or school districts. Several years ago, the two highly popular programs were reevaluated in terms of the number of children served, space requirements within the Museum, staff time, and revenue generated. The result was the elimination of the individual Lending Service and a substantial escalation of the Classroom Collections program.

The current Classroom Collections program consists of thirty collections which are contracted out to individual schools or school districts throughout Southern California. Each collection consists of approximately 200 museum-quality science specimens and historical objects. The collection is housed at the contracted school or district for the loan period of one school year. During this period, the materials may be utilized in the classrooms, libraries, science centers and laboratories of the individual schools according to the

needs of the individual teachers. The contracted school or school district is responsible for an annual rental fee and insurance coverage while the collection is in their possession.

THE COLLECTION

The bulk of the loan collection, comprising over 7,000 items, still derives from deaccessioned specimens and objects from the various departments within the Earth and Life Science Divisions of the Museum. Each Classroom Collection includes science materials (taxidermied mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, articulated skeletons, fossils, marine life, and insects), historical objects and models (from categories including exploration, colonial life, Native Americans, westward movement, rancho and mission life, and California's gold rush), as well as cultural artifacts from various foreign countries. Each exhibit includes a descriptive label briefly covering both scientifically or historically pertinent information along with several characteristically unique features of the particular specimen or artifact.

Remarkably, a sizeable proportion of the inventory dates back to the early program years. Specimens have survived the fifty-plus years of constant classroom circulation. Each specimen/artifact is encased in its own professionally designed plexiglass and wood exhibit case, scaled down to the needs of the classroom. Until recently, specimens were reviewed on an annual basis to check for possible insect infestation, heat deterioration, loose mounting, or case damage. The escalation of our programs has required us to request collection review, and possible repair or refurbishment only on a biannual basis.

It is crucial to the preservation of the collection that repairs be handled by museum staff technicians. To encourage timely reports of damage, and to avoid makeshift repair attempts at the school or district level, the Education Division of the Museum has remained responsible for collection maintenance. However, implicit in the annual contract between the school and our Museum is the acknowledgement that the borrower will be financially responsible for any damage, loss or theft, and will assume financial reimbursement at the fair value as determined by the Lending Service.

Karen Himes is Lending Service Coordinator at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California.

DEACCESSIONING: WHO OWNS PROPERTY WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY ON LOAN OR IS OF UNKNOWN STATUS

by Judith L. Teichman

The term *deaccessioning* implies ownership of the property involved. One of the first steps in clearing out unwanted objects may be to determine ownership.

1. Unclaimed Loans

When does an unclaimed loan become the property of the museum? In the absence of an exceptional loan agreement which anticipates the situation, state law governs the retention or transfer of ownership of property. There are three types of laws which may operate, effectively, to transfer title to unclaimed loans:

- a. There are general statutes limiting the time within which claims for property may be made.
- b. Unclaimed property laws *may* be applicable to property left unclaimed with a museum.
- c. Legislation dealing specifically with loans to museums has been adopted in the following Western Region states: Arizona, California, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

Under the general unclaimed property laws, title is transferred to the state, not to the party holding the unclaimed property. The relationship between a state's general unclaimed property law and legislation dealing specifically with loans to museums varies. For example, the unclaimed property law in the State of Washington specifically exempts property covered by the State's museum loan legislation from its scope. On the other hand, California's museum loan legislation specifically supersedes its unclaimed property law but provides that:

"... at its option, a museum may report property which has been on loan unclaimed by its owner for more than seven years ... for disposition in accordance with the provisions of the Unclaimed Property Law."

All versions of the museum loan legislation include procedures for giving notice of the museum's intent to terminate a loan. If the museum complies with these procedures, and the lender does not assert a claim for the property within the time specified in the legislation, the lender's right to recover the property is barred. In addition, the museum loan legislation in California, Oregon and Utah bars lenders from recovering property loaned to a museum after 25 years have passed since the date of the last written contact. Claims are barred even

though the museum has not given notice of intent to terminate the loan. In California, the lender's rights are barred unless the written contact is "evidenced in the museum's records."

If a museum in California or Oregon *represents* that it has acquired title to property pursuant to the museum loan legislation, anyone who purchases the property from the museum acquires good title.

It appears that the time involved in searching records for evidence of written contact or the lender's last address, and concern with the political consequences of asserting rights to property loaned to the museum, have inhibited museums from taking steps to acquire title to property under museum loan legislation. And so the problems with old loans linger on.

Perhaps the solution lies in setting priorities. For example, the initial effort could be to acquire title to and deaccession objects which present a hazard to the remainder of the collection or which take up an inordinate amount of space. If the need to dispose of objects is obvious, the action is less likely to generate controversy which could reflect negatively on the museum.

2. Undocumented Property

The old saw, "possession is nine-tenths of the law" holds true. If there are no documents or circumstantial evidence indicating the contrary, property in the possession of a museum is presumed to be the property of the museum. Be aware that circumstantial evidence of the contrary might be nothing more than a retired curator's recollection that the last known owner had frequently loaned but never given an object to the museum.

The museum loan legislation adopted in Utah codifies the presumption of ownership. It states:

"There is established a rebuttable presumption that any [materials deposited in] a collecting institution are the property of that collecting institution."

Arizona has gone the other direction. It treats undocumented property as though it could be property on loan to a museum. To acquire title to it, the museum must follow procedures similar to those

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prescribed for acquiring title to loans.

In California, Oregon or Utah a registrar can hedge the museum's bets by both (a) documenting the object's presence in the collection for as many years as possible, and (b) following the steps for deaccessioning objects in the collection. By way of example, even if the only documentation available is a signed statement of a security guard that he or she recalls seeing the object on display before the galleries were redone in 1975, that is worth obtaining and retaining. If, after the year 2000, a claim is made for the object or the proceeds from its sale, the museum will have evidence to support the defense that it acquired ownership under the 25 year statute of limitation.

Establishing proof of ownership of unwanted objects so they can be disposed of, is complicated because the facts can be so varied and because of the need to provide the museum with a good defense against future claims for the objects. If the objects have any significant

value, the museum should consult with an attorney to be certain that its documentation can be used in court.

3. Conclusion

Generally, museum registrars are well-suited to dealing with the issues involved in determining ownership of unwanted objects. They tend to be organized, methodical and accustomed to documenting their actions, and they usually have a healthy share of common sense. The biggest hurdle in clearing up ownership questions may be simply taking that first step in the thousand mile journey.

Judith L. Teichman is an attorney-at-law in San Francisco, California. Ms. Teichman was instrumental in the development of legislation governing unclaimed loan property in California. A copy of this article with citations (omitted in this article) may be obtained by writing Ms. Teichman at 2558 Clay Street, #1, San Francisco, CA 94115, or call (415) 921-2483, or send a facsimile to (415) 346-7250.



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DEACCESSION OF PREHISTORIC MATERIALS IN ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUMS

by Holly Young

The deaccession of prehistoric materials is a complex undertaking in modern archaeology museums. The decision-making process often involves distinctions which are less clear-cut than for historic or contemporary material culture, with numerous ethical pitfalls. Museums that collect individual prehistoric objects-as-art sometimes have an easier choice, as their collecting aims are more similar to historic or contemporary art museums than to repositories and archaeological research museums.

These institutions are not only driven by missions that are different, but also by an additional code of professional ethics. Since the act of collecting prehistoric specimens (excavation) is a destructive process, which impacts a non-renewable cultural resource, the ethical course for an archaeologist is to submit a well-documented, complete collection for curation; the ethical course for an archaeological repository is to curate that collection in its entirety. In practice, deaccessioning prehistoric materials from an archaeological collection usually only takes place if there is no reliable excavation documentation and there is no potential for research or educational use of the artifacts. Other criteria, such as quality or redundancy, are not seen as relevant. In fact, modern archaeological science in its adoption of quantitative methods demands redundancy. It also demands the curation of complete, uncultured collections, since replicability is a key element of scientific methods. Therefore, for the last fifteen or twenty years, the trend has been away from deaccessioning any prehistoric materials.

Recently, however, the topic has resurfaced as a major issue for archaeology museums. Due to the boom in contract archaeology projects during the 1980s, repositories are now experiencing a space crisis, while a sluggish economy has caused expansion and renovation projects to be stalled or even canceled. There has been some discussion of selective curation as a resource management tool (Sullivan 1992). In addition, legislation on the federal and state level has resulted in the repatriation of portions of several large collections, which translates into archaeological deaccessioning on a massive scale, over 6,000 specimens in one recent example.

The level of negotiations called for by repatriation regulations (in Arizona, it involves representatives for the State, one or more tribal governments, the archaeological community, as well as the museum) and the need for formal approval throughout the process, transcends normal in-house discussions over deaccessioning. For prehistoric collections, deaccessioning for repatriation usually results in reburial. Since the artifacts will never again be

available for scientific research, a higher level of documentation is necessary to preserve as much information as possible to maximize the research potential of the rest of the collection. Many repatriation requests involve previous contract projects, which were not organized, analyzed, or reported with the process of repatriation in mind. The records created during the course of the deaccession effort will need to serve as substitutes for the portions of the collection which are no longer available for study.

Another pitfall in the deaccession of prehistoric specimens lies outside the realm of systematic collections. Except for modern sponsored archaeological excavations, it is often more difficult to resolve the question of title. The reality of widespread archaeological vandalism and illegal "pot-hunting" has led some museums which collect prehistoric material culture to refuse to accept undocumented archaeological specimens, or those documented only by hearsay evidence; if they do accept these items, it is only as a transfer of property, an agreement which does not convey title. The problems with deaccessioning something the museum does not hold clear title to have been discussed elsewhere (Malaro 1985:143-144). Recent legislation on the state, national, and international levels has also reopened the debate on the ethical consideration of who can actually *own* prehistoric materials (see, for example, Messenger 1990).

Options for the disposal of prehistoric materials can be severely limited. Most systematic archaeology museums consider buying and selling prehistoric materials absolutely unethical, as it stimulates the market for prehistoric materials and creates a greater incentive for the unsystematic and even illegal excavation of archaeological sites. This leaves deaccession through gift or exchange with other institutions, which is not as prevalent as in the past, the desire to have "at least one of everything" having given way to more focused collecting policies. The most recent version of the AAM Code of Ethics, which suggests that when items are deaccessioned through sale, the money must be used to replenish the collections, further complicates deaccessioning for archaeology museums. This stipulation prevents them from deaccessioning previously acquired objects which are outside the museum's scope of collections, for example, art works, through sale since they do not purchase collections and since the funds cannot be used for anything else, such as collections care. It is hoped that with the current review of the ethics code that the special situation and needs of archaeology museums will be recognized.

Holly Young is Assistant Curator at Pueblo Grande Museum and Cultural Park in Phoenix, Arizona.

WHY AUCTION HOUSES?

by Alan Fausel

Much to my surprise, a frequently asked question at the Butterfield and Butterfield booth during the AAM conference and the WMC is, "Why would an auction house be interested in a museum conference?" Having been involved in the art world for most of my adult life, the concept of the auction house as an integral part of the art market seems quite natural. Auction houses have long been utilized by museums and collectors to buy and sell works of art. Although it is the paintings by Picasso, Van Gogh, and Monet that make headlines, auction houses handle a wide variety of property from arms and armor to stamps and coins. The versatility and open, public access of the auction house make it an attractive marketplace for all kinds of museums.

Many museums use auction houses to sell items from their permanent collection which are inappropriate or no longer consistent with the museums' mission. They may also endeavor to upgrade their collection by selling items of lesser quality than other examples already in the collection. The money gained from these sales can then be used to acquire objects of better quality or in a different area.

Auction houses are also convenient in the handling of large estates which a museum may receive in the form of a bequest. Frequently, development officers will encourage a donor to include personal property such as jewelry and furnishings in a bequeathed estate with the knowledge that these items can be quickly converted to funds through an auction. A large full-service auction house can place a diverse array of property in appropriate catalogues and sales.

One of the main reasons museums choose an auction house to handle their property is the open, public nature of the sale. At an auction, items are placed on the market with full access to anyone who cares to bid. A public sale not only allows a community to support the institution by bidding on the property, but it also shields the museum from ethical questions of selling directly to individuals.

While some museums prefer to announce and promote their sales in hopes that the charitable aspects will inspire stronger bids, others wish their sales to remain anonymous for fear that the public may misconstrue the museums' intentions. Auction houses generally prefer the former scenario for obvious profit motives, however, they will be most accommodating

where the issue of confidentiality is concerned. As with museums, auction houses need to be particularly aware of credit lines. When a museum sends a work to auction it is important that they make certain the auctioneer is made aware of how it should be credited.

If there is a sufficient amount of property, a single owner catalogue may be suggested. These types of sales can be very successful as they generate a great deal of community interest, however, they are difficult to market to national and international buyers. A buyer interested in Staffordshire porcelain is unlikely to be on the catalogue subscription list for Navajo blankets. When faced with a diverse selection of property these sales present a marketing dilemma as the auction house tries to get the right catalogue in the hands of the right buyer. It may often be better to place property into specialized catalogues with like property from various consignors.

The fees an auction house takes from the proceeds of a sale vary greatly depending on the type of property, and its value. These fees may include a seller's commission, insurance, transportation, and charges for illustrations in catalogues. Most of these fees are negotiable depending on the desirability and value of the consignment. One fee which should usually be waived for museums is the *buy-in* fee. This is a fee the auction house charges on unsold items which are scheduled to be returned to the consignor. Since the museum usually does not want the property back, it should be offered in subsequent sales until it is ultimately sold.

In general, you will find that auction houses are more than eager to speak with you regarding deaccession of property. In a competitive art market auctioneers are constantly on the lookout for fresh property that has not been on the market for decades. Since museums often deaccession items that have been hidden in their storerooms for years, potential sales are greatly enhanced as the works have not been seen recently by dealers and collectors.

Even if you are not in a position to sell property, feel free to contact an auction house's museum service representatives. They can help you with general values, formal appraisals and a variety of charitable event sponsorships and other programs.

Alan Fausel is Director of Museum Services at Butterfield and Butterfield in San Francisco, California.

THE CHENEY COWLES MUSEUM DEACCESSIONING PROJECT

by Lynn Harrison

Throughout its seventy-five year history, the Cheney Cowles Museum has accumulated collections well within, and well outside, the scope of its original purpose.

In the 1980s, as the organization clarified its mission statement and developed its nationally recognized collection management policy, the Museum initiated a critical review of its collections holdings. Over 1,200 articles of clothing, 4,500 mineral specimens, 2,000 mounted birds and mammals, approximately 2,500 firearms, edged weapons and associated militaria, and 1,500 pieces of furnishings, decorative arts and household goods were evaluated between 1984 and 1991. As a result, a total of about 8,000 objects were deaccessioned from the permanent collections.

The deaccessioning procedure of the Cheney Cowles Museum was designed to ensure that each object received the same careful scrutiny whether or not it was to be deaccessioned. The series of checks and balances incorporated into the evaluation process eliminated many of the mistakes common in most deaccessioning. The following steps were followed throughout the process:

1. A specific area of the collection was chosen for evaluation (i.e., textiles, natural history, firearms)
2. The Curator of Collections evaluated each object in the collection using specific criteria which included:
 - a) is the object outside the collection scope
 - b) what is the object's condition
 - c) is the object duplicated in the collections
 - d) is the object a reproduction or missing some original parts
 - e) what is the quality of the object
3. After the recommendation by the Curator of Collections, the Director and other curatorial staff reviewed each object and offered input.

4. A list was compiled and presented to the Collection Management Committee for their approval or disapproval. Each item was physically reviewed by the Committee.
5. Upon approval from the Collection Management Committee, a report and recommendation was made to the full Board of Trustees. By the time an object was officially deaccessioned it had been reviewed by over forty people.
6. A deaccession form was completed which listed the object name, description, accession number, provenance and any other pertinent information with spaces for signatures of the Curator of Collections, Director, chair of the Collection Management Committee and the president of the Board of Trustees.

Disposition of the deaccessioned items posed a concern. The textiles were distributed to regional historical museums. The natural history and mineral collections were dispersed to local colleges and universities, Spokane School District, and a wildlife refuge. Firearms, household furnishings and decorative arts were approved by the Board for public auction.

The decision was also made to hold the auction in Spokane, the community where most of the donations to the Museum originated, and still home to many of the early donors' heirs. There was newspaper and television coverage, and a small comparative display was installed with explanations as to what deaccessioning was, why certain objects were deaccessioned and why others were not. It was stated over and over that all proceeds from the auction were to be set aside as an endowment fund restricted to the ongoing care of the permanent collections.

The Museum put the topic of deaccessioning before the public in an honest and straightforward manner. There were no outcries, no anger. People understood.

Lynn Harrison is Curator of American Indian Collections and former Curator of Collections at the Cheney Cowles Museum in Spokane, Washington.

DEACCESSIONING SURVEY

by Janice Capecci

In 1990, an extensive survey was sent to 400 art museums across the United States. 208 museums responded, some included their deaccessioning policies, procedures, and worksheets. The results were used to compile a sample deaccessioning checklist, which can be customized for use in other types of institutions (see page 15).

31% have never deaccessioned and do not have a written policy for deaccessioning. While 60% of the deaccessions was during the past 20 years, most museums have deaccessioned 10 or fewer objects in the last 5 years.

Many criteria are considered when determining whether or not an object should be deaccessioned. The most common reason for removing an object from the permanent collection is that the object is no longer relevant to the mission statement. Other reasons include: the object may be damaged/deteriorated beyond repair, not museum quality, duplicate material.

While the number of museums which deaccession items is rising, the degree of examination and scrutiny for determining that course of action has risen, as well.

What to do with a deaccessioned object? 52% choose public auction. 20% transfer, 13% trade with other institutions, 6% private sale, and 5% return the object to the donor.

The disposition of any funds generated from deaccessioning is often a cause for concern. 90% use funds to purchase objects for the collection, 17% use funds for collections care, and 7% use the funds for purposes such as educational programs or building improvements.

Janice Capecci is Assistant Registrar at The Oakland Museum in Oakland, California. For a more detailed version of the responses to the survey, please write to Janice Capecci, Art Department, The Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland, California 94607, or call 510-238-3005.

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Advertising rates are as follows:

1/4 Page	\$ 75.00
1/2 Page	\$125.00
Full Page	\$250.00

To place an ad in the Registrars' Committee - Western Region newsletter, please contact:

Maren Jones, Chief Registrar
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
900 Exposition Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90007
TEL: (213) 744-3406 or FAX: (213) 746-3628

Louis Goldich, Registrar
San Diego Museum of Art
P.O. Box 2107
San Diego, CA 92112-2107
TEL: (619) 232-7931, ext. 230 or FAX: (619) 232-9367

Spring Deadline is February 1, 1993 - Contact Maren or Louis TODAY!

DEACCESSIONING AND THE "LEFT" OBJECT

Ambivalence, Ambivalence, Ambivalence...

by Georgia Freedman-Harvey

Ambivalence is an apt word to describe deaccessioning for a registrar, especially in a small to mid-size museum. After all, it is the registrar whose signature generally appears on the formal deaccession records. With the dawn of the newly revised AAM Ethics standards, much of the gray area of deaccessioning has been washed away. But what of deaccessioning materials left at the institution, not on loan, but just left and never claimed? Such is the case of one institution:

The scene -- a small museum established more than fifty years ago. In its early years it was viewed as a place to exhibit the permanent collection only. Changing exhibits were few and far between. Storage was not even a part of the original building, but storage niches were carved out over time and as the collection began to grow the need for storage became more urgent. The museum was no longer able or willing to exhibit the entire collection at all times.

The institution fell in and out of favor over the years, as those governing it felt more or less committed to the arts. In the mid-1980s it found itself with no clear registration procedures, no plans for computerization, and a storeroom that looked like an old dilapidated warehouse, crammed with art and objects which had been "left" over years and years at the institution. Most of the items left without documentation had been there for well over ten years. The only information available about these objects was from staff members who were well versed in the history of the institution. The only documentation was from some sketchy records from the events for which the objects had been brought. This included such things as invitations and press announcements of the fundraiser auctions. The objects in question had never been formally accessioned into the collection, only stored.

As with many museums, auctions were, and still are, a popular form of fundraising. This is a case in which objects brought for various reasons were never claimed, no records were kept or maintained on donors' addresses, let alone even donors' names. Further, most of the items were of little value by themselves, but taken together as a whole and sold at auction, they could bring

a significant sum of money for a small institution.

The questions such a situation raises for a registrar, and with the hopes for the institution as a whole are:

1. What obligation does the institution have to locate the donors and are they considered donors?
2. What obligation does the institution have to use these funds for acquisition only?
3. What are appropriate uses for any funds realized?
4. Should the institution only trade these items or can they formally auction them?
5. If they were never accessioned into the collection and are of little value, does the institution have the right to sell them off on an informal basis to their constituents?
6. Is this deaccessioning or cleaning house for the benefit of the institution?
7. What would compel the institution to formally document this process?

In today's climate of law, ethics and increased public scrutiny of museums, an institution should think through the handling of even "left" objects very carefully. The following outlines how this institution handled the disposal of these "left" objects:

First, a non-partisan, qualified art historian was brought in to complete an in-depth inventory. This inventory was then presented to two auction houses for review and estimates. The estimates were compared, and a decision was made to divide the collection between the two houses. Negotiations ensued with both auction houses and terms were established. Whenever deemed necessary, legal advice was sought.

It was determined that the institution would follow strict deaccession guidelines laid out by AAM (based on the 1978 Ethics Code) even though the objects were never formally accessioned. All objects and records were checked at the time of the inventory for any possible accession or catalog numbers.

(continued on next page)

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The items were auctioned over several months, thus ending years and years of the institution serving as a warehouse for unwanted art works left in the spirit of trying to benefit the institution. Documentation of the entire process was carefully made. Then came the real work - the dilemma - the decisions - What was the appropriate use of the money?

The institution had come to a fork in the road, acquisition or collection storage improvement? This is a path that can divide small and mid-size museums from large museums. It is an argument that has led to heated debates and which is still unresolved for many. This situation highlights some of the arguments for and against using deaccession funds only for acquisition.

With newly realized funds in hand, an inventory of the collection complete, computerization in process and the acquisition of new space within the institution to be used for state-of-the-art storage, the decision was made to renovate storage with the auction funds. The result would be proper lighting, climate control, state-of-the-art storage racks and flat storage for the first time in the history of the collection. Priorities of the conservation needs of the collection would be established, and the institution would seek out new acquisitions, for the first time in years. Further, the realization of this storage facility positioned the institution to begin the accreditation process.

The funds were used exclusively for the renovation of the storage room -- lighting, flooring, fire-resistant doors, storage furniture, climate control system and basic conservation supplies to be kept in-house.

The institution could have purchased an acquisition, although the funds realized would not have allowed the institution to buy a significant work of art, or have been able to properly store or care for the new object. However, by using the funds to renovate storage (for which there was no available grant source at the time), the institution was committing itself to preservation and education, two key components of the definition of a museum. Bringing new objects or newly conserved objects into the old storeroom would have been a step backward in time for these objects. The poor condition of the storeroom was a barrier to the institution moving forward in serving both the public and the objects. While it can be argued that money from the realization of a deaccession can only be used for other objects, it is not an across-the-board, black-and-white issue for all museums.

It is hoped that with growing professionalism and continued sophistication of museums, and increased understanding of the importance of registration, museums will make a commitment at the Board level to make documentation a key priority. This would hold for any objects left at the institution for whatever reason. Further, it is suggested that all depositors of objects be well informed as to the path their object would take throughout its stay at the institution, whether temporary or permanent, so that future generations of museum personnel are not burdened with the "left" objects of others.

Georgia Freedman-Harvey is Museum Studies Coordinator and faculty member of the Department of Art, California State University, Long Beach.

(continued from page 4)

violation of the public trust in that it would enable a public asset to return to private hands. However, if the items are of sentimental value, there might be extenuating circumstances. If confronted with a request you may wish to consult Malero (1985:151-155).

A conclusive statement from the Code of Ethics of the Museum Store Association, Inc. reads, "The sale of deaccessioned material through the museum shop is unacceptable. Even though an item may have been properly deaccessioned, the public may perceive the transaction as the museum store participating in the liquidation of the museum's collection." The same reasons could be used to discourage the museum from including deaccessioned items in rummage sales and similar fundraisers.

A final inappropriate method is the gift or sale of items to staff, trustees or their representatives. It is never appropriate to give deaccessioned items to staff or

trustees. The sale of deaccessioned items to staff or trustees is also generally considered a conflict of interest and many Collection Management Policies clearly disallow it; however, the AAM's 1978 publication Museum Ethics takes a more liberal position for trustees wishing to purchase works at public auction. It states, "No trustee, person close to him or individual who might act for him may acquire objects from the collections of the museum, except when the object and its source have been advertised, its full history made available and it is sold at public auction or otherwise clearly offered for sale in the public marketplace."

Like so many of the collection management issues we are confronted with, determining an ethical, practical manner of disposing deaccessioned collection items is indeed a delicate balancing act.

Paulette Hennum is Registrar at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California.

OBJECT DEACCESSION CHECKLIST

(continued from Janice Capecci's article on page 11)

Accession # _____
 Description _____
 Acquis. Date _____
 Photo in File _____
 Conservation _____
 Needed _____
 Value _____

Authority _____ Date _____

Reason for Deaccession:

No Longer Relevant to Mission Statement _____
 Not Museum Quality _____
 Redundant _____
 Deteriorated Beyond Repair _____
 Other _____

Recommended for Deaccession by:

Director _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Curator _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Registrar _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Deaccession _____
 Comm. _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Records Searched for Restrictions:

Deed of Gift _____ Bill of Sale _____
 Acc. Record _____ Other _____

Clear Title Verified _____
 Restrictions _____

Source:

Gift _____

Donor: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Credit Line: _____

Notified: _____ (deceased _____)

Purchase

Vendor: _____

Address: _____

Fund: _____

Source

Unknown _____

Recommended Disposition:

Public Auction _____

Trade _____
 Transfer _____
 Destruction _____ (Reason _____)
 Other _____

Approved for Deaccession by:

Director _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Curator _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Board of _____
 Trustees _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

(attach minutes of Board meeting)

Deaccession _____
 Comm. _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Not Approved: _____
 Reason: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Changes Noted in:

Object file _____ Museum labels removed _____
 Comp. rec. _____ Acc# rem. from obj. _____
 Loc. rec. _____ Photo in archives moved _____
 to obj. file _____

Deaccession Report Sent to:

Education _____ Library _____
 Develop. _____ Other Dept. _____

Disposition:

Sale _____ Auction House _____
 Date _____ Sale Price _____

Transfer _____ Institution _____
 Date _____

Exchange _____
 Dealer/Institution _____
 Date _____

Destruction _____
 Means _____

Net Funds Actualized

Deposited in Account # _____

Sale Records Files _____

Credit Line for Funds when Used _____

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If you have information to share in our Spring issue, which will focus on *Inventory*, or our Summer issue, which will focus on *Recycling*, or know just the right author for an article, please call editors Kim Caldwell-Meeks (602-994-2621) or Deb Slaney (602-252-8840).

This newsletter is for you and by you.

Your suggestions are encouraged.

Spring Deadline is February 1, 1993
Summer Deadline is May 1, 1993

COLLECTIONS NOTES

by Kim Caldwell-Meeks

STATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

ALASKA (Judith Hauck)

The Annual Meeting and workshop of Museums Alaska was held in Anchorage from October 27-31, 1992, with a record attendance of over 60 participants. **Beverly Serrell** provided a workshop on evaluations of exhibits, and **Helen Alten** moderated a conservation symposium. In addition, there was a very stimulating panel on *Jump Starting Repatriation*. Panelists included **Rachael Craig**, a member of the Native American Graves Protection Act Review Committee, **Rosita Worl**, Board of Directors of the American Indian Museum, **Timothy McKeown**, National Park Service, and three Alaska curators.

Museums Alaska elected officers of the Board of Directors: **Gail Holinger** - President, **Martha Madsen** - Vice President, **Judith Hauck** - Secretary, and **Sharon Abbott** - Treasurer.

Thanks to a generous grant from the RC-WR and the WMC, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend my first Western Museums Conference and Registrars' Committee pre-conference session. Thanks so much for this opportunity! It was a very useful and exciting meeting and, of most significance, provided me with the opportunity to be surrounded by so many experienced registrars. It is this sharing of knowledge, experience and information that makes the Registrars' Committee such a special group. I am looking forward to recommending the RC-WR pre-conference session for a regional training session in Alaska next year.

ARIZONA (Deb Slaney, for Gina Cavallo)

The Heard Museum has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$15,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts. Funds from the grant will be used to purchase sliding aluminum art racks, shelving, and matting and storage materials which will be used to rehouse the museum's collection of works of art on paper.

The Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Tucson-Pima Arts Council have been awarded grants from the Save Our Sculpture! (SOS!) project to

coordinate the inventory of outdoor sculptures in Arizona. Results from the inventory will be compiled with other states' inventories to create a national sculpture database to be used as a resource for the preservation of outdoor sculpture. Projects are already underway in Phoenix, Scottsdale, Mesa, and Tucson, just to name a few. If you are interested in participating in this national volunteer project, call Dawn-Starr Crowther, Arizona SOS! Coordinator, at (602) 255-5882.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (Deborah Norberg)

I would like to announce a new Northern California RC-WR representative: **Faith Bilyeu** at the Haggin Museum in Stockton, California. Faith will bring a lot of enthusiasm and energy to the position and I am very happy that she has accepted this role. Please let her know your suggestions and ideas. I am stepping down because I have left the position of Registrar/Permanent Collection Curator and assumed the position of Deputy Director at the San Jose Museum of Art. My registrarial position has been filled on an interim basis by **Stephanie Parkhurst**, who has been appointed Interim Registrar. Please welcome her to RC-WR.

OLD FACES - NEW PLACES

Cynthia Burton Eckholm is now the Assistant Registrar at the Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA. She was formerly the Registrar at the University Art Museum at California State University, Long Beach. Sarah Kennington is delighted to have Cynthia working with her.

Loretta Harrison, Oregon State Representative, is now the Executive Director at the Lincoln County Historical Museum in Newport, Oregon. Loretta assumed the position September 15, 1992, after ten years as Assistant Director with the Horner Museum at Oregon State University. In addition to setting the long-range plans for the museum, Loretta will be responsible for the exhibits, educational programs, and grant proposals. Congratulations, Loretta!

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Assistant Collections Manager, Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum, Los Angeles. The Assistant Collections Manager reports to the Collections Manager and is responsible for pre-accessioning processes, chairing Accessions Committee, loan activities including travelling exhibitions, and collections image files. Also shares responsibilities for donor relations, collections care, collections work for exhibitions, photography, and fiscal matters with the Collections Manager and the Associate Collections Manager.

Minimum requirements include a B.A. plus three years experience in museum registration or collections management, or a M.A. with one year experience. Preference will be given to candidates with museum studies education and experience in automated collections records systems (particularly ARGUS), and loans and shipping. Salary is competitive, based on experience and abilities. Good benefits package.

Mail or FAX resume, letter of interest, and at least two professional references to: Mary Ellen Hennessey Nottage, Collections Manager, at 4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462, (213) 667-2000.

Associate Registrar, Winterthur Museum, Delaware. Responsible for loans, deaccessions, and photographic services; supervises photographic staff of three plus several interns and volunteers; in absence of or as assigned by the Registrar, supervises a staff of ten with responsibilities for inventory control, object movement, computerized collections information management system, and development of new public interactive computer systems.

Requires a M.A. in Art History, American Studies, Museum Studies, or related field. Desire five years collection experience, computer literacy, and knowledge of photography and decorative arts.

For further information, contact Beth Selsor, Human Resources Director, Winterthur Museum, Route 52, Winterthur, Delaware 19735, Tel: (302) 888-4742.

OFFICER REPORTS

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COORDINATOR

(Faye Jonason)

In order to have a beginning to our disaster preparation program, each state/area in our region now has a sister state as follows:

ALASKA	- WASHINGTON
ARIZONA	- OREGON
NO. CALIFORNIA	- HAWAII
SO. CALIFORNIA	- IDAHO
NEVADA	- UTAH

In case of disaster in your area, your RC-WR State Representative will be able to call your sister-State Representative (via phone or FAX as listed in this issue) to relay the extent of the damage, and to mobilize those aids outlined prior to the disaster as probable needs (such as shippers to assist in collections retrieval and transport to a non-affected storage area, or the mustering of manpower to provide relief, or perhaps housing for displaced staff members). This provision of out-of-state numbers does not represent an equal match between numbers of museums in each state.

The next step is the identification of each state's probable disasters and the probable needs triggered by each event. If you have suggestions for change, development, or improvement of our program, please feel free to write or phone me.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: A private company, CIEMTREC, can be called at 202/887-1255 in case of a chemical emergency (spills, leaks, exposure or fire) for information concerning what to do with the hazardous material. They will also provide you with a toll-free emergency response number for those working with the transport of hazardous materials.

TREASURER (Kathy Clewell)

Membership in RC-WR as of October 27, 1992 stands at 446. Breakdown by state is as follows:

Alaska	8
Arizona	37
No. California	102
So. California	145
Hawaii	13
Idaho	11
Nevada	4
Oregon	31
Utah	4
Washington	53
Out of Region	38

Membership renewal letters will be sent to all RC-WR members during December, 1993. Please wait until you receive the renewal letter before sending in your dues check for 1993. Also, please check the accuracy of the data listed on your renewal letter, and take the opportunity to correct or update the information that we have about you in our membership files.

The members present at our annual business meeting held in Riverside, California on October 13, 1992, voted to increase RC-WR membership to \$15.00 annually. Costs associated with your membership such as printing, postage, and putting on workshops have increased. The dues increase will help the RC-WR maintain a balanced budget and improve the quality of membership benefits in the coming years. RC-WR will be publishing a new Membership Roster that will be distributed to members in the fall of 1993.

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER (Teresa Ridgeway)

Welcome to the newest members of the Registrars' Committee - Western Region! There are many exciting projects on the horizon for the coming year throughout the region, so we look forward to your active participation.

New RC-WR members from 8/12/92 through 10/27/92:

ARIZONA

Susan Dolan, Tucson Museum of Art

CALIFORNIA

Norman Cohen, Acorn Paper Products Company, Los Angeles
Mary Ellen Conway, Los Angeles
Cathryn Tagliani Croall, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Stephanie Parkhurst, San Jose Museum of Art
Marilou Percival, Museum of History and Art, Ontario
Etty Rich, Martyrs Memorial & Museum of the Holocaust, L.A.
AnneMarie Schaaf, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
Gretchen Snyder, Key Ranch, Placentia
Ann Spicer, Martyrs Museum & Museum of the Holocaust, L.A.
Mary L. Vaage, Capitola Historical Museum

UTAH

Kathleen M. Bourne, Utah Arts Council, Salt Lake City

WASHINGTON

Lynn Anderson, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma
Tom Bennett, Independent Museum Professional (mount maker), Seattle
Patricia Reed Charlop, Seattle
Dan Gurney, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle
Donna Hogeruis, The Burke Museum, Seattle
Kirk Manahan, Lile North American, Kent
Lisa Mannery, Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle
Miles Miller, Yakima Indian National Museum, Wapato
Hai Ren, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Washington, Seattle
Jim Rittiman, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle
Alan Shipman, Museum of Art, Washington State University, Pullman
John Wickstrom, Seattle Art Museum

WORKSHOPS

The National Gallery of Art, the Conservation Analytical Laboratory of the Smithsonian Institution, and the Canadian Conservation Institute of Communications Canada is co-sponsoring a two-day workshop titled *Art in Transit*. Designed for museum professionals concerned with packing and transporting paintings as well as commercial art packers and shippers, the workshop will be held January 21-22, 1993 in Los Angeles, California. Information will include: the safest techniques for various shipping situations such as criteria for transporting paintings; methods for building effective packing cases; and courier procedures. Also addressed will be the effects of different temperatures along the painting's journey as well as the shock, vibration, and handling encountered in different modes of transport.

Cost of the two-day workshop is \$250. Included in the cost are two publications that each participant will receive: Art in Transit: Studies in the Transport of Paintings and Art in Transit: Handbook for Packing

and Transporting Paintings. A limited number of need-based scholarships may be available to cover the registration fee for applicants from small museums. Scholarship applications must be received no later than four weeks prior to the workshop. To request additional information, registration materials, or scholarship applications, call or write: Art in Transit Workshop/Scholarship, Conservation Division, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565; Tel: 202/842-6432.

The American Society of Indexers is having their tenth annual mid-winter conference. Titled *Common Links for the 21st Century: Indexing Beyond Words*, the conference will be Saturday, January 23, 1993 at the San Francisco Marriott-Fisherman's Wharf in California. The cost is \$65 ASI members/\$75 non-members if registered before January 1, 1993; the fee is \$10 higher after January 1, 1993.

Featured presentations include Susan D. Coerr, who will be speaking on the similarities between Indexers and museum Registrars; Tom Duncan, Head of the Museum Informatics Project, UC Berkeley, who will provide information on how to coordinate access to multiple collections; and Jessica Milstead, The JELEM Co., on natural language processing and end user searching, and the creation of large thesauri. Additional speakers are: Frank Norick, Principal Museum Anthropologist, UC Berkeley; BevAnne Ross, Ph.D.; and Maryly Snow, Architecture Slide Librarian, School of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley.

For further information on registration for this workshop contact Annmarie Mitchell, Conference Coordinator, 390 Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720; TEL: 510/642-0956 or 510/642-3810.

**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
REGISTRARS' COMMITTEE -
WESTERN REGION
Western Museums Conference**

Tuesday, October 13, 1992

Riverside, California

The meeting was called to order by Lella F. Smith at 12:15 pm.

I. Introductory Remarks - Lella F. Smith

Lella welcomed those present and had each person introduce themselves. She then went through the notebooks provided to all attending and pointed out that the reports of RC-WR officers, appointed positions and state reps were contained within. Lella then thanked Sarah Kennington and all those who worked on the pre-conference workshop for a job well done and congratulated them on the success of the workshop.

During 1992, twelve workshops were organized by members of the RC-WR. Each state held one, either alone or in conjunction with state museum association annual meetings. Lella also announced that the WMC is planning a series of workshops in lieu of an annual meeting in 1993 and would like feedback from the membership as to what people are interested in. RC-WR will be mailing a questionnaire to the membership; Jody Ochoa agreed to help with the mailing. The RC-WR is designing a workshop to be given a trial run at the WMC Board meeting in Hawaii in early 1993. The topic is *Basic Registration*. When the workshops go to the different states, experienced RC-WR member registrars residing in the state may be asked to participate and help with the session.

II. Secretary's Report - Jody Ochoa

Jody asked if there were corrections to the 1991 minutes and noted that in the 1991 breakfast meeting discussion of the movie *Morris Louis Goes to Japan* had been corrected to *Morris Louis Goes to Milan*. There were no other corrections. Kim Caldwell-Meeks moved that the minutes as printed in the 1991/1992 Winter Edition of the RC-WR Newsletter be approved, Kathy Clewell seconded and the motion carried.

Jody reported that she received 92 surveys during 1992. The results are currently accessible and can be sorted to provide information for those who need it. Because this information is valuable and important to the success of the RC-WR, Jody feels it should be maintained on an annual basis. The report on the survey sparked discussion on how to use the information to help WMC board members understand RC-WR needs. Many present felt that it would be a valuable tool to help promote more "nuts & bolts" sessions. If anyone would like a copy of the report or information from the survey, please contact Jody.

III. Treasurer's Report - Kathy Clewell

1991/92 RC-WR Treasurer's Report:

Opening balance as of 9/20/91	9,892.35
Total income for 1991/92 year	9,060.47
Total expenses for 1991/92 year	11,717.91
Closing balance as of 10/10/92	\$7,234.91

Jody Ochoa moved that the Treasurer's Report be approved as presented, Genevieve Prlain seconded. The motion carried.

Proposed Budget RC-WR 1992/93

Balance carried over (1991/92 budget)	7,234.91
Anticipated 1992/93 income	12,450.00
Anticipated 1992/93 expenses	12,080.00
Expenses carried over (1991/92 budget)	1,440.00

Kathy will take care of producing a new membership brochure before her term as RC-WR Treasurer ends. She will send out update forms for members with address changes, etc.

Discussion was initiated concerning the tapes that pre-conference speaker Steve Keller generously donated to the RC-WR tape library. Bill Allen suggested that RC-WR buy another of his tapes, which is used by security people to train new guards. The tape covers the responsibilities of guards. After discussion it was agreed that the RC-WR purchase the tape.

Ten stipends were awarded to members to attend the WMC Conference in Riverside.

IV. Introduction of Appointed Officers

RC-AAM Liaison	Jane Kamplain
Archivists	
RC-WR	Marilyn O'Keeffe
Newsletter	Carolyn Yee
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Idaho	Mary Suter
Nevada	Robert Nysten
Oregon	Loretta Harrison
Utah	Gloria D. Scovill
Washington	Laura Thayer

Wendy Franklin reported that we now own a copy of the The Museum Forms Book published by the Texas Association of Museums. If anyone would like to use this as a resource, please call Wendy for information. Wendy was reluctant to make copies of forms in the book because there is a copyright. After discussion it was decided that we should contact TAM and explain our use and see if it would be okay to send copies to RC-WR members requesting the information. Wendy is also interested in receiving copies, from different institutions, of their code of ethics currently in place.

Kim Caldwell-Meeks discussed the new format for the newsletter. The staff is concentrating on one topic per issue and hopes that everyone will find the newsletter useful as a reference source for specific subjects.

Deb Slaney talked about upcoming issue subjects including deaccessioning, public art, collection inventory and recycling in museums, and asked that people please feel free to contribute articles. She also announced that Sally Legakis has volunteered to be the New Reads Editor.

Maren Jones announced that she has five ads for the next newsletter. If anyone is interested she will send out a flyer.

V. RC-AAM Update - Phil Stoiber

Phil passed around the new brochure that the national committee has produced. He stated that there are 650 members and of those 99 are members from the western states. He felt that it would be nice to have more representation from the west. A biannual journal, Registrar, a newsletter, notice of publications, seminars and workshops, and task force reports such as the one which produced the standard facility reports are among the benefits of membership. A membership directory

will be coming out in April, 1993. Phil wants input on whether or not the format should be a three-ring binder so that updating it would not be so costly. He also asked that RC-WR members circulate the information concerning the Kay Paris Memorial Award.

Phil also updated the group on RC-AAM activities. Martha Fulton, RC-AAM Chair, has been working with the AAM to establish more representation from RC-AAM when AAM reviews proposals for the annual meetings. Due to these efforts more registrars are represented on the committee so that more support will be given to sessions of interest to registrars. The current schedule of updating the Dudley/Wilkenson book and distribution is Spring, 1994. The pre-conference workshop for the 1993 AAM Annual Meeting is scheduled for May 15, 1993, and is on deaccessioning. Other proposed sessions include a double session called *So You've Deaccessioned, Now What?*, *The Artist and the Museum*, *Communal Language of Cultural Exchange*, *Good Neighbors*, *Sharing Loans with Mexico*, *Loan Agreement Forms in the Real World*, *Photograph Pricing and Reproduction Rights*, and *Traditional Methods Challenged by Nontraditional Methods*. There are also several sessions proposed that RC-AAM will co-sponsor with other AAM standing committees.

VI. New Business - Lella F. Smith

A. Guidelines for Workshops

Responding to the request from state reps for guidelines on how to organize a state workshop, Lella opened the subject for discussion. After general discussion, it was determined that Laura Thayer, Deborah Norberg and Sarah Kennington will work on creating a short "how to" instruction sheet for organizing workshops.

B. Membership

1. **Brochure** - It is time to update the old membership brochure. Kathy suggested that anyone interested in making comments take an old brochure, look it over then get your comments back to the committee. Lella asked if anyone was interested in serving on the committee. Maren Jones and Faye Jonason volunteered.

2. **Categories** - Jody began a discussion on the absence of a "corporate registrar" category within the RC-WR by-laws. At this time there is no such category thus leaving a grey area. We have given these registrars voting privileges over the years, but in the by-laws it states that voting membership "shall be open to those professionals desiring to support the objectives of the RC-WR and are associated with non-profit organizations..." After much discussion, the consensus of those present was that RC-WR look at re-writing the by-laws after noting how the national committee solves this problem. Bill Allen made a motion that the RC-WR membership definition conform to the RC-AAM as long as we all agree that it is a clear statement based on the intent of what the person is doing rather than the job title or their corporate affiliation. Jody Ochoa seconded.

3. **Cost of Membership** - Lella opened discussion on raising the cost of individual membership from \$10 to \$15 annually. Some of the ideas that came up included: providing a scale based on annual income; offering an assistant registrar membership at \$5; offering more complimentary memberships to entice future members; sending an insert out with everything we send out which states "Another service provided by the RC-WR...If you know of anyone who would benefit please fill out"; and forward the newsletter to other departments within your own organization. After a healthy exchange the members present felt that we should look to the future and agreed that the benefits currently offered by the RC-WR are worth \$15 a year. Genevieve Prlain moved that RC-WR raise the membership cost to \$15. Phil Stoiber seconded. The motion carried.

C. Vacant Positions

1. New Reads Editor - Sally Legakis
2. State Representatives:
Northern California - M. Faith Bilyeu
Hawaii - vacant
3. Archivists:
Marilyn O'Keefe will catalogue and sort material (if someone will send her the boxes).
Scott Atthowe volunteered to store and keep RC-WR records in his facilities.

4. Program Chair:

The person in this position is responsible for organizing and overseeing arrangements for the pre-conference workshops. A suggestion was tendered that we combine this position with a new position, Vice Chair. After much discussion, those present felt that the Program Chair remain an appointed position.

5. Vice-Chair:

The person in this position would be involved in officer responsibilities and be a natural to assume the duties of Chair when it came time for the person in place to step down. Many present felt that this position should be an elected office. This is an important position in that there would be someone to step in case the Chair was unable to fulfill those duties. Faye pointed out that any addition to the number of officers for RC-WR requires a change in the by-laws and must be approved by the membership by mail vote. Diane Nicholson moved that we create a new position of Vice-Chair. Jean Swearingen seconded. The motion carried. Mary Suter will look into the way other organizations handle the Vice-Chair and Chair-Elect situation, so that we will have a better idea on how to proceed.

D. By-Law Changes

With so many changes to the by-laws coming up, Lella appointed a committee to look into the revisions. Marilyn O'Keeffe, Diane Nicholson, and Deborah Norberg will form this committee.

E. 1993 Workshop & Annual Business Meeting

Since we need to have an annual business meeting, Lella suggested that we schedule one for early November, 1993 in San Francisco and have a workshop in conjunction with the meeting. Faye suggested looking into what JFK University has to offer. Marla Misunas will look into this. There are several topic suggestions from the survey. Faith Bilyeu and Marla Misunas will take over organizing the annual business meeting/workshop.

F. Nominating Committee

Connie Zamora volunteered to be Nominations Chair.

G. Non-Profit Status

At this point the RC-WR does not have 501 (C) (3) status with the IRS and Kathy is using her social security number for RC-WR business. After discussion, the members present decided it was best to leave it alone and check with WMC to see how they handle the situation.

H. Announcements

1. Marla Misunas announced that JFK University has a list of theses in the Museum Studies Department and the library will photocopy it for those interested.

2. Scott Atthowe announced that there is an *Art in Transit* workshop planned for January or February at Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It has been organized by the National Gallery. Scott will get the information to the newsletter.

VII. Adjourn

Faye Jonason moved that the meeting adjourn. Cory Gooch seconded. The motion carried. It was 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jody Hawley Ochoa
RC-WR Secretary

State Representative Annual Reports

ALASKA (Judith K. Hauck)

In April, 1992, the Alaska RC-WR members participated in a two-day workshop given by Museums Alaska and the Pratt Museum on making safe, attractive mounts for installing exhibit objects. In addition, the 1992 Museums Alaska annual meeting will be held in Anchorage, Alaska, October 28-30, 1992, featuring sessions on program and exhibit evaluation, and repatriation issues. Finally, the Alaska Legislature established the Alaska Heritage Endowment Fund, for providing a stable source of money for acquisitions to the State Museums.

ARIZONA (Gina Cavallo)

A successful workshop on conservation techniques for the storage of paper, photo archives, and textiles was held at the Heard Museum in March, 1992.

We will be seeking support from the RC-WR for a session on collections management for the Museum Association of Arizona Annual Meeting in April, 1993. We hope to have another successful year in 1993 and plan on putting together another workshop, in addition to the session at MAA. Thanks go to Lennee Eller for her work as the previous State Representative and to all of those who helped with the workshop in March, 1992.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (Deborah D. Norberg)

There have been several activities in Northern California during this last year. Two regional "debriefing" sessions were organized. In April, 1992, Marilyn O'Keeffe from the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, facilitated a local meeting to discuss the ALI-ABA sessions she and others had attended. In June, 1992, a meeting was organized to share information from the AAM annual conference. In July, 1992, a workshop on conservation grants was held at the San Jose Museum of Art.

The topic which appears to be of general interest for the next workshop is development and management of intern programs. Therefore, a workshop will be planned on this topic focusing on the new RC-AAM Intern Preparation Manual.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (Sarah Kennington)

The Southern California region of the RC-WR sponsored two workshop since the 1991 WMC Annual Meeting. The first workshop, titled *Early California Collections and Historic Sites*, was held on June 20, 1992 at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana and at Rancho Los Alamitos in Long Beach. In addition to an overview of the care of museum collections in historic buildings, participants were treated to tours of the buildings.

The RC-WR also co-sponsored a day-long WMC pre-conference workshop with the WMC Security Committee on October 12, 1992. Titled *Internal Threat/External Threat: An Assessment of the Vulnerability of Museum Collections*, the event was hosted by the Riverside Art Museum. There were 80 participants from the registration, security, and administrative sectors of the museum, and throughout the western states. Wilbur Faulk, Director of Security, Getty Museum, served as moderator in discussions on security cost reduction strategies, technical solutions for

museum security, how to respond to an internal theft, an overview of law enforcement procedure when a theft is reported, and gang awareness in the museum community. Copies of the pre-conference tapes will be available through the RC-WR tape lending service. Contact Louis Goldich at the San Diego Museum of Art at 619/232-7931 ext. 230 if you are interested.

HAWAII (Deborah Dunn)

I hope you did not think a hurricane would prevent me from sending the Hawai'i Annual Report! The museum staff is busy this morning, placing sculptures back on the grounds, and clearing debris before we open. It has been almost a year since we held our last disaster preparedness workshop, which was attended by members of RC-WR and the Hawai'i Museums Association. This incident has made me more anxious to print the emergency preparedness resource book that is in the works through the efforts of a small group of museum people in the islands. I did not organize other workshops, but RC members continued to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss collections storage and emergency preparedness through 1992.

I have enjoyed representing Hawai'i since 1988. I look forward to seeing everyone in Hawai'i in the Fall, 1994.

IDAHO (Mary Suter)

On April 23, 1992, the Idaho Region of the RC-WR held a half-day workshop in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Idaho Association of Museums. Lynn Harrison, who is now curator at the Cheney Cowles Museum in Spokane, Washington presented the workshop on basic registration procedures.

NEVADA (Robert Nylan)

Twenty-five individuals attended a session held at the Nevada Museum Association this summer on the use of computers to catalog photographs. The session also reviewed other uses of computers in the small museum. The session was presented by Shawn Hall, former Nevada State Representative and Assistant Director of the Northeastern Nevada Museum.

OREGON (Loretta Harrison)

Last March, twenty-eight Registrars, Curators, and Collections Managers from Washington, Oregon

and Idaho met in Portland for a one-day workshop titled *The Ethics of Textile Conservation*. Sponsored by the RC-WR, the session was designed to present conservation guidelines for non-conservators. Another program on conservation is in the planning stage for 1993. Additionally, we are planning a luncheon to coincide with the quarterly meeting of the Oregon Museums Association.

UTAH

No report submitted.

WASHINGTON (Laura Thayer)

The Seattle Art Museum hosted a RC-WR workshop on managing exhibitions on tour. After presentations by museum professionals, conservators, packers and craters, and customs brokers, participants were given a tour of the new museum's storage, preparation, and conservation areas.

Breakfasts were held for Registrars at the Henry Art Gallery in January, 1992, and the Seattle Art Museum in April, 1992. At the Henry Art Gallery, members were treated to a preview of the Anne Hamilton exhibition, *Accountings*, as the final preparations were being made. The Seattle version of this exhibition, also sponsored by the Henry Gallery at the Sao Paul Biennale, included live canaries shipped from Brazil. Anne Gendreau, Loans Registrar, offered her expertise to anyone needing to make an international shipment of live birds!

Stipend Awards

Ten stipends were awarded to RC-WR members to attend the Annual Meeting in Riverside this year. Congratulations to the winners!

Faith Bilyeu	Haggin Museum
Kim Caldwell-Meeks	Scottsdale Cultural Council
Wendy Franklin	California Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Judith Hauck	Alaska State Museums
Paulette Hennum	Crocker Art Museum
Janet Hillson	Phoenix Art Museum
Sally Legakis	Santa Cruz City Museum of Natural History
Jody Ochoa	Idaho State Historical Society
Carolyn Rissanen	The Oakland Museum
Mary Suter	Idaho Museum of Natural History

REVISING MUSEUM REGISTRATION METHODS

On Wednesday, October 14, 1992 at the Western Museums Conference, Kathy Clewell chaired an informative round-table discussion on revising the Registrar's bible, *Museum Registration Methods*. Many participants attended in order to provide their input on the publication, tentatively slated to be released in 1994. From changing the book's format to a comprehensive three-ring binder, to enlarging and updating the glossary, a variety of suggestions were provided for consideration.

The results from the discussion will be compiled with suggestions from other regions, and used for the revision of the book. If you are interested in assisting with this project and providing your two-cent's worth, please write or call Martha Fulton at the Museum of History and Industry, 2700 24th Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112; TEL: 206/324-1126; FAX: 206/324-1346.

A HEAP OF THANKS!

from Chairperson Lella F. Smith

This year, at the Western Museums Conference, RC-WR members were well represented, both as session participants and as audience members. Participation was enthusiastic, as attested by the overwhelmingly positive comments on the session evaluation sheets. Many thanks to all who participated, especially Sarah Kennington and Wilbur Faulk, who organized the pre-conference workshop dealing with a broad range of security matters. There were seventy-five in attendance. Also a special thanks to the Museum of Art in Riverside for their generous participation.

Others whose valuable contribution aided in the success of the conference are Lina Austin, Sharon Blank, Kathy Clewell, Lisa Escovedo, Julia Fenn, Cory Gooch, Paulette Hennum, Maren Jones, Deborah Norberg, Jody Ochoa, Deb Slaney, and Cherie Summers.



1992

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(continued on next page)

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