



REGISTRARS' QUARTERLY SUMMER 1994

A PUBLICATION OF THE REGISTRARS' COMMITTEE - WESTERN REGION

VOLUNTEERS IN THE WORKPLACE

In these times of diminished budgets and reduced staffs, most of us have either had experience with volunteer support in our operations or considered the possibility. This issue of the *Quarterly* will focus on the participation of volunteers in collection management projects in an attempt to address the all too common need to accomplish more with less! Our hope is that the experience of fellow registrars and collections managers will assist both those of you that have not previously solicited or accepted volunteer help as well as others who do have volunteers and are looking for new approaches to utilizing this invaluable resource.

The articles will provide a basic understanding for establishing a volunteer program in your office. Recruiting, training, and supporting the individuals who come to your rescue and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship are benchmarks of many of our contributors' articles. You will find that despite what we might have come to think of dreary tasks in fact are considered by others to be rather glamorous, as they have the opportunity to experience the museum "behind the scenes!"

When a call went out for articles on this topic, we were pleasantly inundated with many responses. This has obviously struck a chord! There are many successful volunteer-registrar relationships out there that you are deservedly proud of. These stand as terrific models to emulate. Many thanks to the contributors to this issue for your willingness to take your hard to find spare time to write articles and share your experiences with your colleagues.

The American Association of Museum Volunteers (AAMV) is a vigorous standing professional committee of the American Association of Museums. They have produced an extensive resource guide, Volunteer Program Administration: A Handbook for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions which could be

invaluable to you in creating and administering a volunteer program. It offers sample job descriptions, evaluation forms and program guidelines designed to be adaptable to "every possible volunteer setting." Many thanks to the AAMV for offering the handbook to our membership at a reduced price with mention of RC-WR affiliation. You will find details to place an order here within the *Quarterly*.

A note regarding the Winter *Quarterly* which addressed **Methods of Labeling Objects**. It received an enthusiastic response from Marianna James Munyer who is co-chair of a task force created to study various methods and materials for marking objects. This project is jointly sponsored by the Registrars Committee - AAM and the American Institute for Conservation (AIC). Our newsletter will be a great assistance to them in the process of collecting information from the field. Their goal is to eventually produce a written report on possible marking alternatives, their safety and success, and to hold a workshop or session on the subject at a future AAM and/or AIC annual meeting. You will find a "Marking Questionnaire" within this newsletter which lists five questions of particular interest to the task force. I'm sure they would appreciate hearing from you, so please make the effort to respond! In the event the *Quarterly* somehow missed the numbering problem that is baffling you, the national committee's work may provide you with the guidance you need.

I would like to congratulate the RC-WR members who chaired sessions at the recent AAM annual meeting in Seattle. Ted Greenberg, Renee Montgomery and Lella Smith's sessions were terrific and fortunately very well attended and received. On a self-congratulatory note, I was also pleased with my own! Gail Joice spearheaded an evening event for the AAM Risk Management Committee which sought input about developing, improving, and using emergency

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preparedness plans and response to disasters. Also an excellent effort. Let's present the western front again at the 1995 annual meeting which will be held in Philadelphia! The meeting's theme "Museums: Education for the Future" draws from the AAM publication Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museum. This document led many museums to reassess and expand their educational roles and responsibilities to serve the public. It always seems to come so early, but it IS time to be submitting your proposals for sessions. The deadline is June 17, 1994. It is honestly a rewarding venture to chair and participate as a speaker in an AAM session. I encourage you to give it a try. If you have not received the program proposal form, give me a call and I'll send you a fax of the form. It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Seattle meeting! Many thanks to our members in the area who were such wonderful hosts.

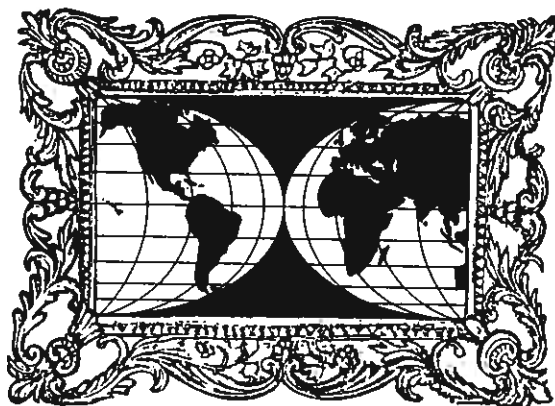
The Western Museums Association conference presents another opportunity for networking with colleagues and continued education. The preliminary program (detailed in Workshops and Annual Meetings column) promises a conference with ample offerings for registrars and what I see as impressively high quality sessions overall. The effort made towards pan-Pacific

participation shows in the session panelists from every Pacific nation imaginable. It will be a unique opportunity to meet Pacific museum professionals and discuss issues of common interest. And of course you won't want to miss the RC-WR annual business meeting! I am hopeful many of you will be able to make the case that in fact you CAN seriously benefit from this experience and won't spend every waking moment on the Waikiki Beach! Once again, RC-WR is offering a travel stipend to a member from each of our nine constituent states. Contact your state representative for details. Please do consider the WMA Honolulu conference as it will be a memorable one. ALOHA!

-Sarah J. Kennington
Chairperson

MORE ON LABELING

In response to the Spring 1994 *Registrars' Quarterly* issue on labeling methods, Irene Zenev of the Douglas County Museum of History and Natural History (Roseberg, OR) writes, "The sharpie pen was rated as only fair when tested for lightfastness." She recommends reading Wood and Williams (1993), which is listed on page 12 of our Spring 1994 issue.



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COLLECTING VOLUNTEERS

by Holly Young and Cathy Reigle

Recently, we were informed that museums collections work is *the glamour aspect of the profession*. We try to keep this in mind as we crawl into those really disgusting hard-to-clean spaces to check the sticky traps for even more disgusting bugs, or as we attempt to move boxes of groundstone debitage packed to within ounces of their bursting weight. Having been in the *glamour profession* for a while, we often need to be reminded of its charms. This usually happens when a new volunteer, with a shining face and eager manner, earnestly announces that what they'd really like to do is work with the collections.

Each institution faces its own particular challenges when it comes to recruiting, training, and managing volunteers. Museums devoted to systematic archaeological project collections, notoriously underfunded in the first place, are in need of a very special kind of collections volunteer who can give a special kind of effort.

At Pueblo Grande, new volunteers are interviewed and subjected to the same screening process that a prospective employee would go through; a personnel file is then maintained for each active volunteer. We ask all the usual questions, and a few unusual ones. (How's your handwriting? Any allergies? Have you ever taken any art lessons? What are your hobbies? Do you collect anything? What do you think are your strong points? What would you like to accomplish through this experience?) We're not just nosy. In addition to practicing due diligence, during the interview and screening process we are looking for various factors that we have found to be significant in creating a successful, productive, and mutually rewarding volunteer experience. Some of these factors won't be found on a resume.

The first is motivation. A volunteer who has specifically requested to work in collections, who takes an active interest in the objects and the techniques involved in processing, is more likely to produce good consistent results. If the primary motive of the

volunteer is social, or if interest in the collection is an afterthought, the experience may become a fruitless search for an acceptable project. A motivated volunteer also needs less supervision, and limited staff time is, after all, why volunteer assistance is so necessary.

Secondly, the volunteer must be willing to make a commitment. The actual amount of time spent at the museum each week is not as important as consistency and perseverance. Having a discrete project with tangible results that the volunteer can commit to and see through to the end is helpful for new recruits. After this, the results of the project can be discussed. If it appears that there is not a good fit between the volunteer, the work, and the collections staff, other work opportunities in the museum may provide the volunteer with a more comfortable situation. The experienced volunteers can go on to assist with the more nebulous day-to-day tasks, since they have a better sense of the goals of the museum's collections management plan.

This is the third critical factor: a willingness to help with whatever is necessary to accomplish these goals. Although we try to tailor projects to a volunteer's skills, interests, and experience, much of the *glamour* work is tedious, repetitive, and often messy. It is more conducive to chapped hands and paper cuts than to anything else! It's true that every once in a while we get to spend time on Navajo textiles or rare books, but as an archaeological repository, for each spectacular object, there are literally thousands of plainware sherds, or hundreds of black and white negatives which document some obscure archaeological testing project. Volunteers who understand this concept, who realize that it is precisely this effort to organize and maintain these basic bits of data which are the true value of the collection, are the most likely to enjoy collections work and do it well. This awareness usually comes through previous education and experience, but if the volunteer is receptive, it can be inculcated during the training process.

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VOLUNTEER ENCOURAGEMENT AT THE HI-DESERT NATURE MUSEUM

by Jim DeMersman

The phone is ringing off the hook; a bus load of 40 third graders has walked through the door; the public restroom is overflowing; a newspaper reporter wants an interview about the upcoming exhibit that is in pieces on your office floor, and you're supposed to be at a meeting with the President of the Board. If this sounds like a typical day, then you are much like the staff at our small museum. How on earth are we supposed to get "normal" museum things done - like inventories, cataloging, photographing and data input? I am a firm believer that this is why God made volunteers. We have had a great deal of success in using volunteers to help with registrarial work. Here are some of our tips for a successful program:

- * We provide a half-day training session that introduces the volunteers to standard museum practices and our jargon. This covers more esoteric milieus like collections philosophies, collections policies and conservation issues. It introduces them to the forms that we use and why. We give them training in handling collections. Then we introduce them to the task at hand, the procedures for the day and who to go to if they have questions. We have found that this makes the volunteers feel special - that they are on the inside of the museum world - and it adds to their level of professionalism. One of the neatest things I have witnessed is the interaction between a volunteer and the visiting public as she explained with great pride what she was doing.

- * It is important to provide the proper supervision. Even after training, we have found there are still many times when the volunteers will have a question or two that we did not answer. The supervisor will also be able to check the work for quality control and provide valuable feedback to the volunteer to assure that the job is being done in the proper way.

- * It is important to provide all the materials to do the job effectively. Have a ready supply of forms, sharpened pencils, clipboards or film for the volunteers when they arrive. We want them to be professional, so

we should be likewise in preparing for them. Give them clear instructions and be willing to spend some time with them the first couple of times. I spend part of every day, no matter how busy it is, getting to know our volunteers better. It is that "bonding" that makes for loyal, dependable volunteers who know that I sincerely care about them as human beings.

- * Do not forget to say "thank you" each and every time that volunteers finish for the day. We have a standing staff rule that no volunteer is to leave the museum without at least one thank you from the staff (and if it comes from all four of us - so much the better). These folks are giving of their time and talents, the least we can do is thank them. Once a year we have a get-together with all of our volunteers and we trade stories about the strangest thing found in the collection that year or from their trips to other museums. It is a fun, relaxing time that reinforces good museum practices.

- * One of the benefits that we have found from this program is that we have lots of friends who are willing to testify as to the state of the museum's collections and its needs. Volunteers who have helped with the initial inventories have been willing to speak up at meetings as to the deplorable storage conditions, the superfluous items in the collections and the need for more dollars and equipment to bring the collection into standard museum practice.

Like any staff situation, whether paid or unpaid, it is not always perfect. But I believe with patience, perseverance, and time, volunteers are well worth the investment. I know that this museum is a better place because of the volunteer involvement. It certainly is a lot farther along than it would be if we had to wait for the professional staff to do it all.

Jim DeMersman is Director of the Hi-Desert Nature Museum, which is owned and operated by the Town of Yucca Valley, California.

SOUTHWEST MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS SAVE COLLECTIONS FROM EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE

by Cheri Falkenstein-Doyle

On January 17, 1994 an earthquake measuring 6.9 struck the Los Angeles area. At the Southwest Museum, the shaking was violent enough to produce some frightening-looking cracks in gallery walls, and to clutter public areas with fallen plaster and debris. Museum collections were spared major damage due to the persistence of volunteers who, following the disastrous Whittier Narrows earthquake of October 1987, began an ongoing project designed to protect pottery, kachina dolls, and other fragile items from breakage. The Southwest Museum boasts a corps of nearly 100 dedicated volunteers, a few of whom have accumulated up to 10 years experience in collections care. The museum relies on these volunteers to help plan and carry out labor-intensive projects such as rehousing collections, and also to respond to emergency situations.

Storage conditions at the Southwest Museum present a challenge, especially with regard to protecting objects from earthquake damage. The museum houses most of its collections on four floors of the Lummis Caracol Tower, a seven-story structure originally designed as office and living space for researchers in residence. The tower's sole access is a narrow, central spiral staircase. Its top floor rises one story above the main museum building, and is particularly susceptible to shaking. This floor houses the museum's 11,000-piece collection of southwestern pottery. Before 1987, pottery sat on particle-board shelving in free-standing metal racks. During the Whittier Narrows earthquake, the unbolted shelves lifted several inches into the air, dumped their contents and then collapsed onto one another within the racks. In all, 208 ceramic vessels sustained major damage. In the tower's basement, kachina dolls fell or rolled into one another, breaking snouts, horns and other fragile body parts. Volunteers

and staff spent many hours collecting, sorting and labeling broken objects, and gradually began working to prevent a similar situation in the future.

In 1989, Southwest Museum Chief Curator Jonathan Batkin selected a core collection of 138 pots to be packed away for protection. Under the direction of Assistant Curator of Archaeology George Kritzman, collections volunteers pack the ceramics in bubble cushioning and placed them in carefully labels, individual corrugated cartons. After bolting the storage racks together, they shelved the cartons and restrained them with heavy-duty cotton twill tape. By the end of 1993, nearly all 11,000 ceramics had been rehoused. In the basement, volunteer Robert Curry gave the museum's 500 kachina dolls much the same treatment. Each doll now stands in its own carton, buffered with polyethylene and cushioned with polystyrene peanuts.

When curatorial staff arrived at the museum on the morning of January 17th, they were relieved to find that damage to the building was primarily cosmetic. Many objects on exhibit had been jostled from their mounts, and two were irreparably damaged. In the Caracol Tower, however, storage units remained intact. Of the objects rehoused since 1987, a Hopi pot in its carton fell from the top of an eight-foot rack and sustained no damage. Once again, the museum relied on its volunteer staff to help clear debris, write condition reports and reshelve library materials; but due to their previous efforts, damage to the collections was minimal. At present, the Southwest Museum is developing a plan to further improve storage conditions by reorganizing the tower. As in the past, volunteers will contribute much of the physical labor, as well as sound ideas and experience, to the project.

Cheri Falkenstein-Doyle is Curator of Collections at the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, California.

ONE VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Roxane Cohen

I have had a love affair with museums ever since I can remember. In elementary school, the Brooklyn Museum was my favorite playground. I admired the Egyptian mummies, wandered among the model rooms set up with period furniture and gawked at the classical marble statues. Later, in high school, I volunteered my time typing and filing for one of the curators at the American Museum of Natural History, luxuriating in the opportunity to wander behind the scenes. Still later, my infatuation was indulged as a member of the visiting public and I attended museums, large and small, renowned and obscure, at every opportunity.

Now I am again a volunteer and am fortunate to participate both in public and non-public aspects of a museum's functions. As a volunteer in the Registrar's office of a large museum, I know that I am an important part of the core of that museum. My work is primarily with record keeping and research, but I have also had the opportunity to examine and admire objects and artifacts at first hand.

Many of the volunteers in the Registrar's office have also worked in other departments of our Museum. I talked to other volunteers in an attempt to determine whether there were differences in being a volunteer in different areas of the Museum. The first thing upon which everyone agreed was that it was necessary to feel comfortable with the staff. It is important for volunteers to enjoy the people with whom they work. While much of the work is routine because of the necessity of maintaining accurate and complete records, even routine work can be rewarding when the environment is pleasant. Most volunteers felt that their attention to detail was respected and appreciated and permitted the staff to devote their energies to more immediate other tasks.

One of the most interesting aspects of working with the records in the Registrar's office is the opportunity to delve into historical files. Since our Museum is over seventy-five years old, these files are treasure troves of history. From the papers pinned together with straight pins, predating paper clips and staples, to those compressed into computer printouts,

one gets a sense of history and the past. Most of the early records are written in the kind of meticulous and artistic penmanship which is truly a lost skill today. Many of these records also are windows into personal histories; relationships between the Museum administrators and the donors of their precious family heirlooms reflect individual lives. Exhibits in years past were vastly different from today's scientific displays, and so were letters, files, and records.

Volunteers sometimes have the opportunity to assist with condition-reporting objects as they are prepared for special exhibits. This includes handling extraordinary historical items, and makes possible much closer viewing of objects after they are placed in their display cases. Previewing exhibitions from this hands-on perspective is one of the most exciting reasons to volunteer to assist the Registrar.

The major drawbacks which were mentioned by some volunteers were the relative isolation of their tasks, along with the routine nature of some of these tasks. Some people do prefer to work directly with the public and this is not a usual function of the Registrar's office. Being behind the scenes of a large museum emphasizes the line between the public and non-public aspects of such an institution. Many of the volunteers have served in several capacities or locations within the Museum. Many were also touring docents, while some worked in other public departments of the museum, such as education, membership or the bookstore. Volunteering permits the versatility of a variety of tasks and experiences.

Museum volunteers are frequently told that they are essential to the operation of any museum. This is the case since museums are all too frequently underfunded and understaffed, but it is also one of the rewards which volunteers cherish -- reassurance that they are needed and appreciated. There is variety in the work of the Registrar's office, the opportunity to be truly useful and the pleasure of working with some of the most interesting documents, objects and people in a community.

Roxane Cohen is a docent and volunteer in the Registrar's Office at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County in Los Angeles, California.

USING VOLUNTEERS FOR COLLECTIONS INVENTORY AT THE DE SAISSET MUSEUM by Anna Koster

Without volunteers, current staff would need deferred retirements to complete a physical inventory of the de Saisset Museum's 6,000-plus art and history objects. With volunteers working each summer, the job may get done in a third of the time -- six or seven years.

Volunteers know this is a unique opportunity to discover the treasures that lie hidden in the farthest reaches of the museum. They get to investigate the depths of storage where none but the most intrepid staff has gone. We use the museum's newsletter, pleas in docent meetings, direct requests to our "worker bees," press releases, and word-of-mouth to recruit.

Our first summer was challenging because we were also moving collections from storage areas where fire alarm and sprinkler systems were being installed. At the same time, we inventoried our painting collection. Few of our loyal volunteers were eager to carry precious objects up and down stairs while being pressured by contractors' deadlines.

The following summers' recruitment was easier because we began inventorying the history collections, an area of great interest to many of our volunteers. For 1994 -- the third summer -- we have returning veterans, who are confident they can do the job. We even have photos to offer the press with our media releases.

We use professionals from other museums and other fields -- archaeology, archives, and history -- to help with an intensive half-day training. This is more interesting for me and the volunteers, and reinforces information. Outside experts help volunteers understand the "rules" are not my personal whims and obsessions, but necessary safeguards and professional standards. Since variations in procedures exist, the other presenters and I plan ahead, organize, and make sure we all "get our stories straight."

Training, which includes some hands-on experience, covers art/artifact handling, putting ID numbers on objects, taking proper measurements, re-wrapping objects, and putting them back safely. We give an overview of the whole process, with a flow chart and a to-do list. Formal training only touches upon the ID numbering systems for objects, what to do with objects

that don't have numbers, and conservation issues. At the end of the session, I show those who are interested how to update the computerized catalog records (Willoughby's Snap!).

An extensive training packet with photocopied material reiterates what was presented and includes some readings that give more information. We keep a packet nearby throughout the summer, with additional books and articles for reference.

We videotape the training and use it at a second session where I work with volunteers who couldn't attend the original training. We also offer the videotape and packet to those who couldn't be here for either of the sessions.

Despite our emphasis on formal training, the volunteers learn by doing. The first days of the inventory become hands-on training that bring to life what was covered earlier.

Volunteers sign up for at least one three-hour shift per week: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. or 2-5 p.m., Monday-Friday. Since schedules change so often, each week volunteers put their hours on a timeline schedule for the following week. On Monday mornings, I move the "next week" schedule to "this week" and add a blank timeline for the following week. When people call in with last-minute changes, I pencil them in myself. With a brief glance at the timeline, I can evaluate the volunteer schedule.

There are drawbacks in using volunteers for an inventory -- a process that requires accuracy and detail and can endanger both the objects and their computer records. Supervision is necessary, especially in the beginning when volunteers are still learning. Even when they are old hands at the tasks and don't need me anymore, I spot-check their work and double-check computer records for consistency, accuracy, and completeness. They also work in pairs to provide a check against mistakes.

For updating the computerized catalog records, I made a computer instruction manual that gives step-by-step details with screen printouts and incredibly basic

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VOLUNTEERS, WE NEED YOU!

by Lella Smith

When I worked at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, we had a wonderful volunteer team of seven retired professionals who were recruited through the Museum's Volunteer Coordinator, much to her amazement. Initially, when I approached her for help, she responded to my request by saying, "Lella, I would love to send you someone but I am afraid that you will never find anyone to work in your office where the work is, well,---clerical and boring".

With that challenge, I decided that there must be other people who would enjoy doing what I do. Since I had just been asked to speak to the Service Council, one of the volunteer groups at the Museum, I decided not to try to recruit from among those in the audience. I ended the speech by saying that the Registrar's Office had a need for some assistance and requested that individuals who alphabetize their spices, type recipe cards, buys Christmas presents in June or prepares income taxes in January when the booklet arrives, make themselves known because there was a place for such special people in our office. It worked. There were others out there like me. Four and a half years later when I left the Museum, the same volunteers who came forward were still working in the department. Others joined us, having heard by word of mouth.

The genuine appreciation that our office had for the volunteers and our eagerness to make volunteerism a mutually beneficial and satisfying experience was energizing and contagious. My staff suggested giving an annual volunteer appreciation luncheon, creating a

questionnaire to discover the talents and interest of the volunteers. An information sheet was developed for the volunteers to tell them about us...*help yourself to coffee, where to find supplies, etc.* File space and work stations were created for the volunteers where they could keep their projects. Instructions were prepared for the projects ahead of time so that if a job was not finished by the time they left they could pick up instantly the next time. Photographs of the volunteers were taken and their responsibilities defined so other museum staff would know their names and involvement in our office.

The great suggestions did not just come from staff members, they came liberally from the volunteers. And, boy did we hear some interesting anecdotes from some of them about the less-than-positive treatment they had received from other departments who did not seem to understand how to utilize the available talent!

I was asked by Deb Slaney to provide a copy of the questionnaire we used in our office to learn about our new volunteers and familiarize them with our office. The form is quite simple and could incorporate information about any museum discipline, but we found it to be a valuable tool for opening up lines of communication. At my current job, we are not permitted to use volunteers and I really miss the help, the energy created by the dynamic work force and the family.

Lella Smith is Senior Exhibits Registrar at Walt Disney Imagineering in Glendale, California.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS AUGUST 1, 1994

For information on advertising in this newsletter, please contact RC-WR Newsletter Publisher Maren Jones by phone (213.744.3406) or fax (213.746.3628).

**Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
Office of the Registrar
VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE**

Thank you for your interest in the Registrar's Office. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. We would like to utilize your time and skills effectively - while at the same time ensuring you will enjoy your activities.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE NUMBER

WHAT DAYS WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK? (Please circle) M T W TH F

WOULD YOU PREFER TO WORK IN THE MORNING OR AFTERNOON? AM PM

DATE AVAILABLE:

DO YOU HAVE OFFICE EXPERIENCE?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, does your experience include:

_____ Answering phones/taking messages

_____ Bookkeeping

_____ Filing

_____ Taking dictation

_____ Typing (include wpm)

_____ Writing letters/memos

DO YOU HAVE COMPUTER EXPERIENCE?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please indicate the software you have used:

If no, would you be interested in learning?

Yes _____ No _____

DO YOU SPEAK, READ OR WRITE ANY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, which ones?

PLEASE CHECK ANY AREAS OF OUR COLLECTIONS IN WHICH YOU HAVE STUDIED OR HAVE SPECIAL INTEREST:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology | <input type="checkbox"/> Invertebrate Paleontology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Botany | <input type="checkbox"/> Invertebrate Zoology/Crustacea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Invertebrate Zoology/Echinoderms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entomology | <input type="checkbox"/> Invertebrate Zoology/Polychaetes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Herpetology | <input type="checkbox"/> Invertebrate Zoology/Malacology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History (General Americana) | <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History (Transportation
& Communication) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mammalogy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History (Western Research) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineralogy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ichthyology | <input type="checkbox"/> Ornithology |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Vertebrate Paleontology |

LIST ANY EXPERIENCE AND/OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT YOU BRING TO US!

WHICH TYPE OF PROJECT DO YOU PREFER?

- ☐ Long term or on-going projects, ie: over several weeks
☐ Short term projects, ie: a few hours

ARE THERE PROJECTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO AVOID?

If yes, please list.

WOULD YOU BE AVAILABLE FOR "PHYSICAL LABOR", (ie: moving crates, tables, wall panels)?

Yes _____ No _____

DO YOU FIND ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EASY AND/OR FUN TO DO?

- ☐ Data entry
☐ Organizing large quantities of information into a file or database system
☐ Proofing correspondence, contracts, manuscripts and/or lists
☐ Researching special projects
☐ Spelling (especially scientific terms)
☐ Editing

DO YOU HAVE PREVIOUS MUSEUM EXPERIENCE?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, where have you worked and in what capacity?

VOLUNTEERS AND INVENTORY TRAINING

by Rozell Overmire

Conducting a museum inventory involves writing down the name, number, and location of each object in the collection and often includes compiling other data as well. Photographs are sometimes taken of the objects during an inventory. This information is often put into a database to produce indexes, or the entire collection is packed up and moved to a new location. All of the museums I have worked with on inventories had something in common, a need to account for their collection before a change, whether it was a move, a re-arrangement of their storage areas, or new staff.

Change is always difficult, but the transition can be softened by good management. Volunteers conducting an inventory need clear guidelines. Several formal training sessions can be used to explain what an inventory is and why it is needed. Besides finding those lost items, inventories help to establish formal procedures in a museum and can lead to setting up an accession log, producing gift agreements and other necessary documentary control. Once volunteers understand they are laying an important foundation for the Museum's paperwork, they realize how necessary this process is.

Inventory training materials should include a meeting schedule, a timesheet (to account for volunteer hours that may be used by the museum to write grants for collection management projects), and an inventory card or sheet with accompanying pages to explain what is wanted in each space on the card. Printed inventory cards make the process simpler since volunteers don't have to write that all important unique number on each card! Printed cards prevent duplicates and can be very inexpensive if you count time as cost. If codes are used in the numbering system or location, a key is needed. Extremely helpful is some attempt (a few handout sheets) to classify the collection by category, and a discussion of vocabulary control or terminology.

Before you begin, a session on handling objects, from heavy objects to delicate photographs, needs to be included. "Cataloging From Scratch, A Manual for Cataloging Undocumented Collections in Small Museums", by Caroline M. Stuckert is very helpful on this subject. Methods for tagging or marking objects must also be very clearly explained.

Automating inventory records takes some guidance (i.e. how to enter each field, how to enter and exit the software program, how to make corrections, and how to backup each day's work). An interesting and extremely well designed inventory software program called Museum Inventory System (MIS) has been developed by Ian Morrison of the National Museums of Scotland and has been used for five years by over 60 museums there (it is free for the asking by writing: Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF). MIS was not developed for lengthy cataloging, but simply for inventorying.

If the museum must move after the inventory, packing up is best done by professionals but can be approached with trained volunteer help. Photography should also be directed by professionals, even though some of the volunteers may be good amateur photographers. Savings in cost in these two areas is critical and professionals must be aware of cost in these lean times.

Inventories are probably more labor-intensive than exhibit production. Volunteer help can be an invaluable resource if you prepare your volunteer group to be careful, clear writers who are detailed, but brief. The objects and documents in your collection can survive this stressful time of handling and rest in peace until the next inventory!

Rozell Overmire is the Owner of Overmire Associates, a collections management consulting firm in San Francisco who trains volunteers to conduct inventories in small museums.

COLLECTIONS VOLUNTEERS

by Mary Dieterich

Volunteers either like what they are doing, or they move on! Volunteers in the Collections department have a way of staying put. Therefore, one might conclude that Collections departments are doing something right in the minds of discerning volunteers, who often deliberately choose Collections despite some rather unusual working conditions! A Collections area is not public; rather, it is so unpublic that it is often underground, at the end of passageways, around corners, or behind several other walls. One needs identification and verification paraphernalia to enter or leave the premises. The air is filtered, moistened, and temperature-controlled. The ungloved hand is suspect. The light of day is considered the work of the devil. The monitoring systems hum all the time, and should there be a clank-clank in the system, alarm and consternation run rampant. It is the ultimate in controlled environments!

Collections volunteers are aware of all this, however, and they don't mind. There is a level of quiet and steady pursuit that pervades the work space, even under the most harried of conditions. It is the pervasive air of revelation that keeps everyone around and coming back. It is the daily opportunity of discovery that endears volunteers to the nether regions of a museum. They are an inquisitive, alert, observant group whose penchant for minutia and detail does not inhibit their ability to formulate a larger structure of information. Basically, volunteers enjoy the process of research. They accept, yea welcome, the necessity of blocks of time to solve the unknown and plot directions.

Volunteers who gravitate to Collections appreciate that fine balance between team work and the individual initiative that is inherent in most projects. It is stimulating to be entrusted with a problem to solve, a plan to devise; it is equally rewarding to be considered a member of a team solution. What better feeling than

to be included as a member of the *we* who worked toward a particular goal! The rewards are evident as Collections volunteers get together, share the curiosities of their micro-study, play with ideas, or evaluate the outcome of exhibit projects.

The lure of artifact contact generates all manner of excitement in the minds and hearts of Collections volunteers. Besides the enormous curiosity factor - to see, touch (with gloves, of course), hear the treasures, one has the opportunity to learn about them more intimately and directly. Volunteers are learners, students beyond the casual. They can become possessive, even obsessive, but are responsible in most other respects. They take direction easily, deal with inquiries and questions on a mature level, and thrive on ambiguity. While volunteers may have a flair for the written or spoken word, they are distinguished by their long periods of concentrated silence in the workplace. This a group of individuals who are comfortable with long term relationships -- with things, theories, and a world of maybes -- and whose relationships are built on lifetime skills and perceptions. Consider the possibilities for combining skills! Often a direct skill transfer can be made through utilizing the skills of photographers, computer friendlies, textile fabricators, conservators, journalists/editors, inveterate researchers, or museum aficionados. Other associations are a little more subtle: nurses, medical technicians, chemists, therapists, historians, or metallurgists. All bring a familiarity with perseverance, meticulous care, integrity, the will to work towards satisfactory completion of a project, and all relate to the particular work of the world's museum *moles!*

Mary Dieterich is a volunteer exhibit researcher and collections cataloger for The Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

WHEN YOUR VOLUNTEER IS AN INTERN

by Susan Dolan

At the Tucson Museum of Art, we offer an internship program in cooperation with the Art History Department at the University of Arizona. Students make arrangements through the University to receive three college credits per semester for interning ten hours a week. Although this is an excellent opportunity for students enrolled at the University, not every intern at the Museum receives college credit. We are very fortunate to have many students and recent graduates contact the Museum to volunteer in the Registration Department. We categorically classify any volunteer whose mission is to learn skills in the museum profession as an intern. These volunteer interns are an essential non-paid addition to the museum staff.

Good volunteer management must always consider the personal goals of each volunteer. Although interns are usually ready to help with any task, it is important to provide projects to all volunteers when they begin their internships. By assigning these projects to interns, the registrar can supervise what is done and still be free to complete unexpected requests and put out any fire that occurs during the day. Once interns have projects in progress, they require less supervision, giving their supervisor more time to get work done. A significant project allows the intern to organize and complete a task while giving real work experience and something to include on their resumes.

It is important to continually evaluate your department and your long-range goals in order to perceive what projects you are able to assign to interns. For an example, interns have completed the following projects at TMA: The accession file re-organization project created an accession file for every object in our permanent collection and a separate alphabetical file for each donor. An inventory and data entry project recorded the location of every object in the collection and systematically, as a work was located, its catalogue record was entered into the computer data base. The Mexican Folk Art collection was organized and many objects never previously recorded were catalogued and accessioned. Nearly 300 Oriental objects in the collection were catalogued and accessioned. The mask collection was organized and re-catalogued. Works

which were previously registered as a group were catalogued individually. Archival storage mounts for the Museum's collection of pre-Columbian textiles were made, and the slide and photograph collections were organized.

From the list of possible activities and tasks for interns to complete it is essential to assign the right task to the right person. During the initial interview, it is helpful to listen to the interests, goals, skills and past experience each intern has in order to find a suitable project. Often the initial interview will inspire a new idea for a project especially suited for the individual. For example, one intern with an interior design background designed a floor plan for an environmental improvement grant application. Interns may have skills you do not have and it is in your best interest if you can use these skills when you can. When the right person is matched with the right project, everyone benefits. Less time will be required to supervise and train individuals who have projects well-suited to them.

Establishing a good working relationship with interns is imperative. This can be accomplished in many ways. Offering encouragement to a newcomer to the museum profession is an important first step. Be available to answer questions about your job, your education and your previous experience. Encourage interns to attend museum openings, staff functions, committee meetings and fundraising events. List the interns' names along with the staff in your museum's publications. Appreciate each intern's contribution to the museum. Realize that the more you invest in your internship program, the more you will benefit.

These management guidelines have worked well for the Tucson Museum of Art. Our staff is small, and we rely on interns and volunteers to help execute the museum's mission. The mutual benefits of this relationship are realized when letters arrive from former interns stating how they received their first professional positions because of experience gained working in your office.

Susan Dolan is Registrar at the Tucson Museum Art in Tucson, Arizona, and currently supervises four interns and two volunteers.

(continued from page 3)

The fourth factor is the ability to follow directions; the flip side of this factor is the staff's ability to provide those directions. Even an experienced volunteer needs thorough instructions, both written and verbal. Providing written procedures, explaining the process, and actually going through it step by step with the volunteer will give that individual the confidence necessary to continue independently. Encouraging questions of all kinds during the training period may be trying at first, but is certainly less frustrating to both the volunteer and the staff member than trying to do damage control later. With systematic collections, small initial errors can become magnified and result in the disassociation of an artifact from the contextual information that gives it scientific meaning.

Finally, given our overcrowded conditions and hectic staff schedules, flexibility has proven to be extremely important. While we strive for consistency, we truly admire those volunteers with the ability to work under a variety of less than desirable conditions, who are willing to assist with emergency projects in addition to their normal duties. The commitment to do volunteer work is admirable in and of itself. The further demands we place on our volunteers make them truly remarkable!

Holly Young is Assistant Curator and Cathy Reigle is Library/Photoarchivist at the Pueblo Grande Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

(continued from page 7)

directions. Even the computer-shy can follow these instructions, but the computer-phobic are not forced to do this task -- another reason for volunteers to pair up. Restrictions are placed on the computer records, so volunteers can go only into the fields they need to update. This protects the shielded portion of the record and makes the job easier.

It is important to celebrate accomplishments. We bring volunteers together and make them understand how important they are and what the inventory means to the de Saisset. There is attrition among volunteers through the summer, so we celebrate some milestone about two-thirds of the way through. A thank-you event at the end of the project is important. Follow-up projects (compilations of inventory statistics, completion of computer records, finishing a troublesome storage shelf) offer opportunities to recognize volunteers and express appreciation later in the year.

We cannot say thank you too many times, nor in too many ways. We use personal notes, the museum newsletter, thank-you letters from the director, and special recognition at our annual volunteer luncheon. Saying thank you for one summer's work becomes recruitment for the next!

Anna Koster is Collections Manager at the de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California.

CALLING ALL AUTHORS!

If you have information to share in our Fall issue, which will focus on **Information Systems/Database Management**, or our Fall issue, which will focus on **Relocation/Expansion/Storage Projects**, or know just the right author for an article, please call editor *Deb Slaney* (602-252-8840).

Contact *Kim Caldwell-Meeks* (602-994-2621) with news about members, positions available, awards, or regional activity.

Fall Deadline is August 1, 1994
Winter Deadline is November 1, 1994

VOLUNTEERS AND VARIETY

by Faye Jonason

Having *just* returned from a national program in Boston discussing the *African Americans and the National Park Service Applied Ethnography Program*, I am pleased to say that my volunteer, Sharyn Church, has done a superb job running my office in my absence.

An interested, enthusiastic, and reliable volunteer needs you. Some are in need of simple job training to fill some of your clerical needs such as filing, typing, and photocopying. Others are students in college ready to graduate, have great skills, but need a few units or some experience in the workplace. Some are people who are in-between jobs, or are retired seniors, or simply people who wish to do something important toward the cultural growth of their community. Volunteers are recruited from college non-paid and paid internship/work-study programs, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) and from the Summer Youth Employment Program in the local high school district. In some instances, internships are paid by outside programs, outside foundation internships, or by the schools. The museum foundation, councils, and support organizations also provide people to help.

When potential volunteers wish to work in my department, they fill out a simple application which asks them their reason for wanting to work here and what hours they can commit (and I agree to) and their agreement to notify the department if they cannot attend. If desirable, the volunteer can obtain a letter of recommendation which outlines those skills the volunteer has developed, tasks completed, and qualities demonstrated. Letters never tout nonexistent skills, accomplishments or qualities. If the person only accomplished one thing, was never reliable or had a

poor attitude, the letter reflects only the accomplishment. Applicants are made aware of this fact at the outset. On the job, volunteers are given training, encouragement, and praise. Numbers of service hours are recorded and shared with the museum's volunteer coordinator so that reports and grant applications can reflect this important in-kind contribution. Volunteers are made to feel a part of the museum staff.

Usually simple tasks are given at the beginning, so that assignments are made within the volunteer's capability. Photocopying, typing lists into the computer, printing the tags to label objects, and checking objects against object lists are some simple beginning tasks. Marking objects, wrapping objects, and contacting vendors are tasks requiring responsibility and training. Some of the more seasoned volunteers can fully process incoming loans and donations, from condition reports to vault storage. On days when I am swamped and cannot devote time to volunteers, those who require more direction are usually assigned to the Exhibit Department with the placement of objects into the exhibits and with checking the information on the labels against the Registration record. These assignments serve to expand the volunteers' experiences within the museum.

This small volunteer program exists apart from the museum's regular volunteer recruitment program which provides most of the gallery volunteers. This has been a successful department-specific program for the last nine years in the CAAM Registration Department. Several past volunteers and interns have moved on to paid positions at other museums.

Faye Jonason is Registrar at the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles.

Are you a RC-WR member in good standing? Please turn to page 27 to renew (or sign up a friend).

MARKING QUESTIONNAIRE

The AIC (American Institute for Conservation) and the RC-AAM (Registrars Committee - AAM) announce the creation of a new project designed to study various methods and materials for marking (identifying) objects. **To do this, we will need your help.** Please take the time to finish this questionnaire and mail it to Marianna Munyer or Robert Futernick at the proper address below. If you have expertise that would be helpful to us in our study, please contact one of us. Thank you for completing the following questions.

YOUR NAME:

POSITION:

INSTITUTION:

ADDRESS:

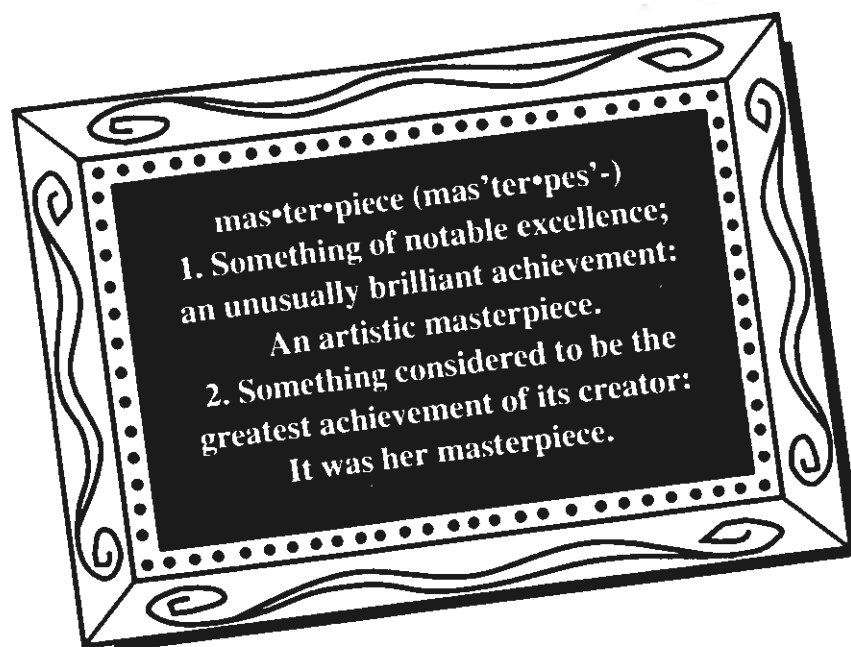
PHONE:

TYPE OF COLLECTIONS:

1. Are you presently marking your collections?
2. Do you use a variety of methods and materials for different objects? Please describe your approach.
3. Do you have questions or concerns about the results?
4. What other materials have you tried in the past? Results?
5. Have you considered using bar coded labels or other new identifying devices? If so, what are the advantages and possible disadvantages? What materials might be suitable for this type of marking?

Marianna James Munyer
IL Historic Preservation Agency
Old State Capital
Springfield, IL 62701

Robert Futernick
c/o Crown Point press
6557 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105



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SPECIAL OFFER TO RC-WR MEMBERS

Volunteer Program Administration: A Handbook for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions by Joan Kuyper, with Ellen Hirzy and Kathleen Huftalen is intended for a diverse audience: museum volunteers, both experienced and new; volunteer program administrators; paid staff who supervise volunteers; elected and appointed volunteer program officers and leaders; and last, but not least, museum directors and trustees. Readers in museums and cultural institutions of all sizes and types - from small historic sites to encyclopedic natural history museums, from community art centers to zoos, from youth museums to botanical gardens - will find useful information in its pages.

Sample job descriptions, evaluation forms and program guidelines are included and can be easily adapted for use in every possible volunteer setting. The extensive resource guide, listing people, organizations, and publications, is invaluable to administrators of established programs trying to improve their services and scope as well as volunteer programs just forming.

The development of this handbook by the American Association for Museum Volunteers was directed by the recognized need for guidelines for effective administration of the programs and activities of the more than 400,000 volunteers serving America's cultural institutions. AAMV, the affiliate of the American Association of Museums representing these volunteers, has brought together the expertise of its members - museum volunteers, directors, educators, trustees, and volunteer program administrators - to provide current, constructive, and practical resources for museum volunteers and their programs.

HOW TO ORDER:

RC-WR members may order the Volunteer Program Administration: A Handbook for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions book at the special discounted price of \$17.00 (\$14.95 plus \$2.05 postage and handling) by sending a check payable to AAMV, P.O. Box 279, Orinda, CA 94563.

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**Available from American Association of Museums Bookstore Catalogue, Spring 1994. (AAM, 1225 Eye St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-9127.)

(continued on next page)

RC-AAM NEWSLETTERS:

"Volunteers in the Registration Department," Spring, 1984 (Reg 1.1).

"Interns in the Registrar's Office," Spring, 1985 (Reg 2.1).

(Reprints available for \$2.00 ea. from : Mary Lohrenz, Mississippi State Historical Museum, P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571).

AUDIO CASSETTES:

Berger, Alma. "Invisible and Invaluable - Behind-the-Scenes Volunteer." (1993 AAM Annual Meeting)

Sands, Patricia. "All our Communities - Challenges Met by Museums and Volunteers." (1993 AAM Annual Meeting)

Skjelstad, Lucy. "The Museum, the Academy, and the Intern: Fostering the Next Generation." (1992 AAM Annual Meeting)

Strottman, Theresa. "Community Partnerships: Training and Utilizing Volunteers in Museum Computer Projects." (1993 AAM Annual Meeting)

(Order cassettes from: Chesapeake Audio/Video Communications, Inc.
6330 Howard Ln., Elkridge, MD 21227; (410) 796-0040.)

RC-WR CASSETTE LENDING LIBRARY:

"Expanding Collections Care--Volunteers in the Workplace."
(1989 AAM Annual Meeting)

(Requests can be sent to: Louis Goldich, Registrar, San Diego Museum of Art, P.O. Box 2107, San Diego, CA 92112-2107; Fax # (619) 232-9367.)

COMPUTER SOFTWARE:

Q.L. Software. The Volunteer Management System. M.J. Esposito and Associates.
(Contact: M.J. Esposito and Associates, P.O. Box 18628, Memphis, TN 38181; (901) 755-1851.)**

Sally Legakis
Santa Cruz City Museum of Natural History

COLLECTIONS NOTES

by Kim Caldwell-Meeks

STATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

ARIZONA (Susan Dolan)

A pre-conference to the 1994 Southwest Arts Conference titled "The Care and Maintenance of Outdoor Sculpture" was held March 9-10, 1994 at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts. The pre-conference was an extension of the national Save Outdoor Sculpture! project, which is in the process of inventorying the nation's outdoor sculptures. The guest speakers were very informative, a comprehensive (ten pound!) notebook with information on the care and maintenance of outdoor sculpture was distributed and the evening bronze pouring during the tour at a fine art foundry was spectacular.

RC-WR sponsored an informative session at the Museum Association of Arizona yearly session March 20-22, 1994 titled, "Rack and Roll is Here to Stay: Three Solutions for the Storage of Rolled Textile Collections."

The Tucson Association of Museums recently reorganized and has formed network groups in Public Relations, Membership, Collections, Exhibits and Education. This new format will provide an improved mechanism for communication and collaboration between the member museums.

Museum shops in Arizona collaborated on a project to promote state museums by marketing t-shirts decorated with works representational of each museum's collection. This insightful marketing concept received an AAM award during the Annual Meeting in Seattle.

I hope to soon complete the planning for the workshop, "Disaster: Preparing for the Big Oh No!" I will have more information about the workshop in the fall issue. This summer I will be busy working on a project to improve the Tucson Museum of Art's collection storage facility with funds received from an environmental improvement grant awarded to the Tucson Museum of Art by IMS.

IDAHO (Mary Suter)

The Idaho Association of Museums annual meeting was held May 6-7, 1994 at the Idaho Museum

of Natural History in Pocatello. Phyllis Morgret, The Herritt Museum, led a session on museum registration methods on Friday afternoon. She was assisted by Mary Suter and Sharon Holmer, Idaho Museum of Natural History, and Jody Hawley Ochoa, Idaho State Historical Society. On Saturday, meeting participants heard from Gloria Scovill, Registrar, and Blanche Miles, Textiles Conservator, of the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City, Utah.

WASHINGTON (Laura Thayer)

Conference delegates to the AAM annual meeting in Seattle enjoyed excellent sessions sponsored by the RC-AAM and experienced the rare and wonderful blue skies of Seattle!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Washington State RC-WR members for their contributions toward a successful conference. Martha Fulton as RC-AAM Chair worked on a national and regional level to coordinate activities and disseminate information. In July, Martha and Christine Runte, 1994 Program Chair, attended the national meeting of program chairs in Washington D.C. to select programs for the 1994 meeting.

Christine, as Program Chair, acted as a clearing house for proposals, retyping when necessary and assembling them for presentation in Washington. As the conference neared she linked session chairs with local resources needed for their presentations.

Julie Knight, Market Place Coordinator, contacted exhibitors and interviewed new people interested in participating in the market place. She designed the market place layout and secured all of the needed resources for the event.

Paula Wolf, Exhibit Hall Coordinator, arranged the set-up and take-down of the registrar's booth in the main exhibit hall. She coordinated the resources available there and undertook the daunting task of scheduling volunteers for the booth during all operating hours.

Many thanks to these wonderful volunteers from all Washington State RC-WR and RC-AAM members.

OFFICER REPORTS

VICE CHAIRPERSON/AAM LIAISON

(Melissa Rosengard)

AAM in Seattle was abuzz with talk of the "information superhighway" . . . well not exactly. In fact, most of us were discussing audience diversity, packing methods, recycling, funding problems, and how to stay employed. It seems more relevant to deal with issues that currently affect how we do our work and how we serve our public. After all, research in "cyberspace" and virtual museum visits are purely conceptual. Nevertheless, the highway concept of communications interconnectedness is becoming reality in the near future. The idea is to be able to transfer information quickly over an infrastructure of cables that can handle a large capacity of information. Airwaves and phone lines are not suitable because they cannot quickly transmit the capacity of, say moving images, to a computer screen.

How museums are involved in the process should be of great importance to registrars in every institution. Prompted by the challenges that the U.S. industry faces in the global economy, Congress is enacting legislation to deregulate the communications infrastructure. In exchange for the profit potential for the industry, Congress is asking to be hooked to the system through education and culture subsidies. The initiatives for inclusion and funding are aimed primarily at schools and libraries - museums are somewhat of an afterthought.

AAM's leadership is working in the forefront of developments in this area - and we need to take notice. They have fought for, and won, the right of museums to be included in some, but not all, of the initiatives being discussed. The AAM Government Affairs Department issued a statement last month - "Museums and Telecommunications Policy." The policy states the importance of museums being on par with libraries and schools, and emphasizes the significance of culture on a communications highway that has the potential to otherwise degrade into an "infomercial highway." For a full copy of the policy, call AAM Government Affairs, or contact them on E-Mail: mroark @ cap.gwu.edu. (E-mails saves trees!)

So why should we be concerned? First of all,

registrars are the main contact for information on museum holdings, and information is the key in this new tekkie paradigm. The years spent on refining systems for incoming and outgoing loans, research agreements, contracts with shippers, traveling exhibition policies, even the way in which we receive training and professional advice (this newsletter) will be moot without adapting in some ways to the new technologies. For the last fifteen years, museums have dealt with technology (i.e. computerizing collections and interactive presentations for visitors), but we have had a great deal of control in how these systems have been structured and presented in our individual institutions. The highway concept is more complicated because the technology is not just an internal decision process - there are issues of external access that we may have much less control over.

A few "what ifs?": How will a museum in Utah control reproduction of an image in their collection that can theoretically be accessed by computer at midnight in Virginia, and then printed out in color photographic quality resolution? What are the possibilities and problems to face if our audience can turn on their computers in a "remote part of the world" (soon to be an anachronistic phrase) and is able to "walk" through a current or past exhibit with virtual reality technology? Will traveling exhibitions become unnecessary if an exhibit can be experienced in virtual traveling shows? Will we ever again have to worry about lighting conditions, pests, gloves and other protective standards if our objects are locked away airtight and museums exist purely in cyberspace? What are the positive aspects of greatly increasing access while dramatically reducing object handling and viewing? What are the security issues if an entire collection can be known and studied off-site by potential thieves? Are viruses possible that could destroy our records? Do we charge fees for this access?

It is probable that we will be dealing with simultaneous "realities" in the near future - our current methods for collections and the developing standards in response to technology implementation. There isn't much to implement now, but it is important to start the dialogue so we can adjust quickly when the time comes.

TREASURER (Gina Cavallo Collins)

I was noticing how empty my mailbox has been

looking lately, and I realized it is because those RC-WR renewals have gone from hurricane forces to a steady trickle. For anyone who hasn't already sent in your renewal form, I encourage you to renew soon so you won't get that dreaded second notice (which is late in coming due to my hurricane recovery!) All who have renewed, THANK YOU, and I promise to get those shiny new membership cards out ASAP (or as soon as I can figure out how to get my labels to print!)

On another note, the RC-WR will once again make available to members travel stipends to the Western Museums Association annual meeting, September 21 - 24, 1994 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Because of the distance, we have budgeted for a \$200 stipend, rather than our usual \$100, for one member from each of the nine states (Hawaiian stipend amount to be determined.) Interested members should send a letter of request, with a statement of financial need and an indication of professional benefits to be derived from attendance, to their State Rep (see the listing on the back of this newsletter) by July 15, 1994.

Only current, paid up, voting members are eligible and priority will be given to those with a clear financial need, a willingness to participate in the RC-WR, or those attending the conference for the first time. Recipients of the stipends will be required to submit a session summary for the next newsletter. We encourage all those interested to apply, as the meeting promises to be very worthwhile, educational, and quite possibly fun! Any questions should be directed to me or your State Rep. I can be reached at: The Heard Museum, 22 East Monte Vista, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1480. Tel: 602/252-8840; Fax: 602/252-9757.

WORKSHOPS AND ANNUAL MEETINGS

1995 AAM Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

Speaking of sessions, the time has come to submit your presentations for next year's AAM annual meeting, to be held in Philadelphia from May 21 -25, 1995. The theme, "Museums Educating for the Future," promises to encourage a host of possibilities for session subjects. If you have a session which you believe best suits next year's annual meeting, the Program Committee wants to hear from you! The deadline for submitting proposals is June 17, 1994, so act now. To receive a program proposal application, summarization of theme, and

presentation guidelines, please contact: **Janice Stanland Dockery, Registrar (and RC-AAM Program Chair),** Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107. Tel: (215) 732-6201; Fax: (215) 732-2680.

1994 WMA Annual Meeting, Honolulu, Hawaii:

Prepare and make way for Honolulu! The early bird deadlines are fast approaching for registration for the 1994 meeting of the Western Museums Association, so if you want to beat the price, register now! Registration payments postmarked by August 21, 1994 will be \$115 for members; afterwards, fees go up to \$135. Fees for nonmembers, students, and participants from outside the United States are \$160, \$60, and \$130 respectively. There is a 15% discount for institutions sending three or more members.

The conference hotel is the Hawaiian Regent at Waikiki, where most conference sessions will take place. There will be special room rates from September 16 - 28, 1994 and children under 18 stay free in rooms if no additional beds are required. The emphasis is being placed on the family, with many restaurants, parks and institutions providing low cost activities. Preliminary programs that include hotel listings are forthcoming, so consider making arrangements soon. Remember, hotel reservations are first come, first served.

The theme of the conference is, "Living Cultures, Living Traditions." As a result, a record number of sessions (with some on each day of the conference!) are available specifically for registrars. They include but certainly are not limited to:

Cultural Consideration in the Care and Conservation of Ethnographic Objects and Organic Materials, a one-day workshop sponsored by the Bishop Museum and the American Institute for Conservation. The workshop will present through panel discussions issues related to the preservation and conservation of artifacts of the Pacific Rim cultures.

Indigenous Peoples in Museums: Cultural-Ethical Conflicts, a double session that will address the care of

cultural materials in museum collections. Roberta Kirk, Registrar with the Museum at Warm Springs will facilitate.

Just Do the Right Thing: Legal and Ethical Issues regarding Museum Collections, discusses through example the implementation of collections policies based on the review of current legal and ethical issues. Topics include: repatriation, deaccession, international treaties, and changes in traditional collections policies.

Plans are Useless, Planning is Priceless - Emergency Preparedness in Museums, proposes practical advice on following through on low-cost approaches to emergency planning.

Internation Agreements, a double session on the development of agreements with indigenous peoples for increased involvement in the research, management, and presentation of ancestral objects and living traditions.

Recycle Your Museum, a one-day seminar and workshop on learning how to incorporate environment friendly materials and methods into daily museum work. Pre-registration is required since the workshop is limited to 40 participants.

Museum Volunteers: The Care and Feeding Thereof, focuses on the importance of volunteers in institutions and how to supervise, train, and reward them. Panelists will also address starting a volunteer program.

Considering the range of topics, registrars should make an extra effort to attend. Limited funding is available from the RC-WR for attendance at the conference, so please contact your state representative to receive further information on applying for a stipend. More information will be forthcoming.

For further information on the meeting, please contact: Western Museums Association, P.O. Box 36069, Los Angeles, CA 90036-0069. Tel: 213/749-0119; Fax: 213/939-6493.

ALOHA, HAWAII!!!

1994 CAM Annual Conference, San Diego, California:

Sponsored by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art, and Wells Fargo Bank, the California Association of Museums is busy preparing for their annual conference. To be held on July 7 - 8, 1994, the conference is providing a number of pertinent sessions, including one particular panel sponsored by the RC-WR on an update in emergency planning (the session will be moderated by our very own Sarah Kennington!) Included in the conference are hosted meals and receptions and a number of San Diego's institutions.

Early registration is \$105 for CAM members and \$120 for nonmembers. After June 5, 1994 fees increase to \$115 and \$135. Please direct all inquiries and fee payments to: Teri Knoll, Executive Coordinator, c/o The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, 2002 N. Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706. Tel: 714/567-3645.

IN OTHER NEWS...

1994 AAM Annual Meeting, Seattle Washington:

On Tuesday, April 26, 1994 the Registrars Committee - American Association of Museums held their annual business meeting at the Seattle Sheraton. Attended by over 325 participants, the luncheon provided an opportunity for collections managers, registrars, shippers, preparator, and other interested individuals to personally meet and greet each other once again. Martha Fulton chaired a well-organized meeting that actually finished ahead of schedule for once(!). Additionally, Mary Case, former Director of the Office of the Registrar, Smithsonian Institution, was presented with the Dudley Wilkinson Award of Distinction for her years of dedication within the field of collections management. Her recognition as an veritable institution was a moving experience for those in attendance at the meeting, and her standing ovation was certainly well-deserved.

Additionally, the 1994 pre-conference soft-packing workshop, presented by P.A.C.I.N., was also held at the Seattle Sheraton. The workshop was an excellent day-long session which discussed the pros and cons of using soft-packing materials for storage and shipping of both two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. The

commentary provided by session panelists varied in opinions and stimulated further discussions on budget, security, environmental and conservation issues related to the use of soft-packing materials. A handy notebook with panel essays was also provided. Congratulations to Brent Powell, P.A.C.I.N. Chair, for organizing a successful workshop!

Finally, mention must be made of the wonderful shipper's dinner held Sunday, May 24, 1994. Held on the 75th and 76th floors of the Columbia Club at the beautiful Columbia Towers, the organizing shipping companies provided cocktails, dinner, and dancing in a setting complete with magnificent views of Washington. Of course, no one will forget the panoramic view from

the ladies room, and the look of shock on Randy Webster's face after discovering he had won two round-trip Lufthansa airline tickets to anywhere the airline flew (Randy, I still owe you a trip to the dessert buffet!) Thanks to the shipping companies responsible for the dinner - it will not soon be forgotten!

Of course, the different panel sessions sponsored by the Registrars Committee provided informative views on topics pertinent to registrars and collections managers. Considering that record numbers attended this year's meeting (over 4,000 people!) there was no wonder why some sessions were standing room only. But overall, there were again a plethora of sessions to cover the variety of ways that registrars do their jobs.

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Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA
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310/825-4563, FAX 310/206-7007

VICE-CHAIRPERSON/AAM LIAISON

Melissa Rosengard, Director
The Pardee Home Foundation
672 Eleventh Street
Oakland, CA 94607
510/444-2187

SECRETARY

Paulette Dunn Hennum, Registrar
Crocker Art Museum
216 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5399
916/264-5423, FAX 916/264-7372

TREASURER

Gina Cavallo Collins, Associate Registrar
The Heard Museum
22 E. Monte Vista Road
Phoenix, AZ 85004-1480
602/252-8840, FAX 602/252-9757

APPOINTED POSITIONS

CASSETTE LIBRARIAN

Louis M. Goldich, Registrar
San Diego Museum of Art
P.O. Box 2107
San Diego, CA 92112-2107
619/232-7931 x230 or 619/232-5200
FAX 619/232-9367

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Cynthia Eckholm, Assistant Registrar
Fowler Museum of Cultural History,
UCLA
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1549
310/825-4563, FAX 310/206-7007

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COORDINATOR

Faye Jonason, Registrar
California Afro-American Museum
600 State Drive, Exposition Park
Los Angeles, CA 90037
213/744-2023, FAX 213/744-2050

FORMS CLEARING HOUSE COORDINATOR

Wendy Franklin, Museum Curator II
Ca. Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Interpretation Section,
Parks Services Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001
916/653-7985, FAX 916/653-9824

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Teresa Ridgeway, Registrar
Bowers Museum of Cultural Art
2002 N. Main Street
Santa Ana, CA 92706
714/567-3663, FAX 714/567-3650

NEW READS EDITOR

Sally Legakis, Registrar
Santa Cruz City Museum
of Natural History
1305 East Cliff Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
408/429-3773

NEWSLETTER ARCHIVIST

Carolyn Yee
6098 Holstein Way
Sacramento, CA 95822
916/391-3536

NEWSLETTER ASSISTANT EDITOR

Kim Caldwell-Meeks, Registrar
Scottsdale Cultural Council
7380 East 2nd Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
602/994-2621, FAX 602/994-7728

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Deborah Slaney, Registrar
The Heard Museum
22 East Monte Vista Road
Phoenix, AZ 85004-1480
(W) 602/251-0253, FAX 602/252-9757
(H) 602/258-0518

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Maren A. Jones, Chief Registrar
Natural History Museum of
Los Angeles County
900 Exposition Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90007
213/744-3406, FAX 213/746-3628

RC-WR ARCHIVIST

Marilyn O'Keeffe, Senior Registrar
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, CA 94118-4598
415/668-8921

JOIN THE REGISTRARS' COMMITTEE - WESTERN REGION

Benefits include the RC-WR quarterly newsletter, membership roster, stipends for workshops & conferences, news on Western Museums Association activities, access to materials in the Forms Clearing House, as well as the Tape Lending Service, and a network of associates who provide support and knowledge.

Membership is valid for one calendar year and expires December 31, 1994.

Voting _____ (Professionals who reside in the Western Region such as registrars, corporate registrars, collection managers, conservators, curators, administrators, students, volunteers, retirees, etc.)
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All contributions beyond the annual \$15.00 dues are welcome and help to further the goals and programs of RC-WR.

Send this form and check payable to *Registrars' Committee - Western Region* to Gina Cavallo Collins, The Heard Museum, 22 E. Monte Vista Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85004-1480.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVES

ALASKA

Judith K. Hauck, Registrar
Alaska State Museum
395 Whittier Street
Juneau, AK 99801-1718
907/465-2901, FAX 907/465-2976

ARIZONA

Susan Dolan, Registrar
Tucson Museum of Art
140 North Main Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85701
602/624-2333, FAX 602/624-7202

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

M. Faith Bilyeu, Registrar
Haggin Museum
1201 North Pershing
Stockton, CA 95203-1699
209/462-4116, FAX 209/462-1404

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Sandy Rushing, Registrar
University Art Museum
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
805/893-2951, FAX 805/893-7026

HAWAII

Sanna Saks Deutsch, Registrar
Honolulu Academy of Art
900 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96814
808/532-8751, FAX 808/532-8787

IDAHO

Mary Suter, Registrar
Idaho Museum of Natural History
Idaho State University
Campus Box 8096
Pocatello, ID 83209
208/236-2603

NEVADA

Janet Petersen, Registrar
Northeastern Nevada Museum
1515 Idaho Street
Elko, NV 89810-4519
702/738-3418

OREGON

Loretta Harrison, Executive Director
Lincoln County Historical Museums
545 SW 9th Street
Newport, OR 97365
503/265-7509

UTAH

Gloria D. Scovill, Art Registrar
Museum of Church History and Art
45 NW Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150
801/240-2299,
FAX 801/240-5551 x1485

WASHINGTON

Laura Thayer, Registrar
Cheney Cowles Museum
2316 First Avenue
Spokane, WA 99204
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REGISTRARS' COMMITTEE - WESTERN REGION

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