CHAIR’S REPORT

Happy Summer Solstice to you all. I hope you all get a chance for some time off to enjoy the long days of summer and get some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

My first thank you this quarter goes to Joy Tahan for her hours of work on our 2002-2003 roster. It was a long, tedious job and I think the result is a well-designed and useful document. I have had questions about phone numbers listed in the roster. Unfortunately they were not labeled, but they are listed in the following order: work phone, work fax, home/alternate phone and home/alternate fax. As you know, this roster represents our membership as of July 1 of last year. In this Quarterly you will find a center insert of new members’ names (as of May 1), formatted so you can take it out and keep it with your roster. Many thanks to Debby Lepp, our secretary, for getting those names together for us. And of course, a debt of gratitude goes to the sponsors of our roster, without whom we could not afford to print and circulate this valuable tool to you.

Kudos to the authors in this issue of the Quarterly: Cathy Mann, Registrar at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, Dina Houghtaling, Registrar of the archives at Lucasfilm Ltd., and Kristen Schmidt, our New Heads editor whose day job is Assistant Registrar at the Tucson Museum of Art. As always, if any of you feel your muse calling, call or email Sara Ding, our estimable editor. She is always looking for articles.

If you have not received it yet, all voting members will shortly receive a ballot to vote for our new slate of officers. This ballot is due NO LATER THAN September 19 so that votes can be counted and the results presented at our October business meeting in Reno. As you vote, think about whether you might be available the next time our nominating committee is looking for volunteers to fill those positions; it is extremely rewarding to be able to serve on the board of the RC-WR. My thanks to the members of the nominating committee, chaired by Carrie Snow, for a job well done.

And speaking of Reno, have you looked over the program for the WMA meeting in October yet? It is available online at www.wigmuse.org. The program committee has done a great job and provided a wide array of sessions and workshops to choose from. We are sponsoring a pre-conference workshop on Sunday, October 19 at the National Automobile Museum. It will be a Soft Packing Workshop, which will include both demonstration and some hands-on participation. PACIN (Packing and Crating Information Network) is co-sponsoring this workshop with us, most notably in the person of Scott Atthowe, who is helping put the panel together and will be one of the presenters. We hope to get questions in advance from those attending so that the panel can personalize their presentations to the audience. More on this later, but please look over the program and think about joining us in Reno in October!

I have been thinking about initiating a formal RCWR website for the past year, and recently received an offer to help get it designed and implemented. Plans are in a very preliminary stage as I write this, and I don’t know where they will be when you get this issue, but if you have ideas or comments, please call or email me. My contact information is on the back cover of the Quarterly.

And my final thanks go to all of you, our wonderful members, without whom this committee would be just a good idea!

-Carolyn Riissanen
2003 RC-WR CALENDAR

June 20
Application deadline for RC-WR travel stipends

July 5
Early bird registration deadline for WMA in Reno

July 11
Deadline for SPC sponsorship

August 1
Articles, reports and advertisements due for Fall Quarterly

August 29
Final deadline for all proposal submissions to AAM

September 19
Last date to vote for RC-WR officers

October 19-23
WMA Annual Meeting at the El Dorado Hotel in Reno, Nevada

October 19
Pre-conference workshop on Soft Packing, National Automobile Museum, Reno

October 20
RC-WR Annual meeting luncheon, El Dorado Hotel, Reno

REGISTRARS’ QUARTERLY
PUBLISHING INFORMATION

The Registrars’ Committee – Western Region Quarterly is published four times a year by an all-volunteer staff. It is published on a PC using Microsoft Publisher and printed at a professional print shop.

The Quarterly is produced as a service for the members of the RC-WR, using the newsletter as a means to disseminate information to the RC-WR membership. All articles are produced with permission of the author/organization and are copyright of the Registrars’ Committee – Western Region.

Publisher: Grace Murakami
Editor: Sara Ding
Assistant Editor: Vicki Gambill

Contact information is available on the back cover of the Quarterly.

Addition to the Spring 2003 edition of the Quarterly: In Niccolo Caldararo’s article the citation at the end of the article on treatment of objects for pesticide removal was missing the publication name: Journal of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

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Collection Re-Housing for a Move: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
By Cathy Mano

It took six museum registrars and preparators approximately one year to pack more than 14,000 objects in preparation for the move of the museum. A temporary lead packet and part-time move conservator were hired to assist staff with this daunting process. The most exciting part of this project was the re-housing we were able to accomplish prior to the move. We identified the areas of storage which were in greatest need of improvement and set priorities: scroll paintings, furniture, folding screens, works on paper, Tibetan thangkas, Indonesian puppets, and textiles. The ultimate goal was to move to a new home that had just about the same amount of storage space as the old museum. We had to think of ways to use space more efficiently, yet make storage improvements across the board in order to ensure preservation and space for collection growth.

In the summer of 2000, I started researching the prices of traditional paulownia wood storage boxes for our Chinese, Japanese, and Korean scroll painting collection since many paintings had none. This was the storage area of greatest concern and it desperately needed revamping. The majority of our Chinese hanging scrolls (approximately 300) were stored in wooden cabinets not individually boxed or separated. Nothing was preventing them from rolling on top of one another every time a drawer was opened. Inevitably, the one that needed to be pulled for loan, exhibition, or photography was at the very bottom of the drawer. Conservators, curators, and registrars all agreed something had to be done to improve access to the collection and prevent further wear and tear from storage conditions and unnecessary handling.

The paulownia wood boxes turned out to be cost prohibitive - $8.90/box compared to $8.90/box for archival archival box for archival board for the same box size and quantity. Our conservation department tested the materials we were interested in prior to any production. We worked very closely with the Hollinger Corporation in Fredericksburg, VA who sent us samples and waited patiently until a decision was finally made about which material, design, sizes, and quantity of box we needed. We chose ten alpha cellulose board for our scroll boxes based on the advice of our painting conservator and we are very pleased with the end product. The boxes are sturdy without being bulky or heavy and are lignin and sulfur free. Yokos were cut out of block Ethafoam to support the knobs of the paintings, which were adhered to the bottom of the box with archival 3M hot melt.

Our collections database administrator worked to get slides for all of the paintings digitized so that we could print images to put on the outsides of the boxes in addition to accession number and specific cataloguing information. This was the crucial step of the process that made everyone happy - not only do the objects have new homes that are archival and nice to look at, they are labeled with all of the pertinent information (artist, title, date) and you can see a photograph of what is inside without even opening the box.

We wrote a grant application to the NEH’s Preservation and Access division requesting funding to completely re-house our collection. Although we were unsure whether we would be able to secure the funding for new storage equipment, we were confident that our grant application would turn out successful. We were hoping beyond all hope that we would be able to do away with our horrible old storage furniture; we couldn’t imagine moving and re-using it. It was due to the incredible team effort of our Director of Museum Services, Head of Conservation and Associate Director of Development, Institutional Gifts (grant writer) that the museum was indeed awarded the grant which paid for new Delta Designs, Inc. cabinets, compact refrigerator systems from Spacesaver Corporation, packing and storage materials, and staffing.

The Delta cabinets we designed for the scroll collection have worked out fabulously. They were based on a design that a previous conservator on staff worked out with Bruce Danielson (President, Delta Designs, and my personal hero) more than 10 years ago. The scroll boxes sit onto shelves so that their ends are visible (the end with the photo and number) and are organized in accession number order. There is a nifty label surface that pulls out at the midpoint between the top and bottom portions of the cabinet that has gasketed doors and casters for mobility. The storage and organization of the scroll painting collection has made it extremely easy for curatorial and conservation staff to find what they are looking for.

Since square footage of art storage at the old museum and new museum is just about the same (approx. 14,000 sq. ft.) we knew we had to use space more efficiently if we were going to continue actively collecting. Those of you currently or recently involved with building projects know that gifts, large and small, seem to come rolling in right in the middle of installing galleries, moving collections, and lending to major exhibitions. Our solution to ensure space for the future was to order cabinets with drawers on Spacesaver compactors so that small objects wouldn’t take up more space than required. We ordered cabinets with glass doors for visibility, and two sizes of drawers for our smaller three dimensional object collections - ceramic bowls and plates, jades, snuff bottles, ncludes, bronze mirrors, jewelry, and coins etc.

As part of the packing and re-housing of these collections, we designed boxes with full lids and dividers out of corrugated polypropylene (Coroplast). Objects were laid out and organized by material, country of origin, size, and date. Each packer decided whether to use the Coroplast or Ethafoam dividers depending on the contents of each box. For example, boxes for larger ceramic bowls and plates were divided with Ethafoam that was cut into a standard size strip and glued (hot melted) to the bottom 1/4” Ethafoam liner. Smaller objects like jade or snuff bottle boxes were divided with Coroplast strips that were notched and could be arranged in different configurations depending on how many and what size compartments were needed.

After each box was laid out and barriers inserted between items, each object was wrapped in tissue and nests were created to act as buffers to pad out each compartment. Newspapers was used to stuff out the remaining portions of the box to prevent movement in any direction. Once packed, these boxes were stacked on high density polyethylene pallets, shrink wrapped and labeled accordingly. All boxes, crates, and pallets were numbered and tracked manually.

The Coroplast boxes that were used for packing are now being used as trays. They rest inside cabinet drawers with the lids stored underneath the box, and the packing materials removed. These boxes fit into a drawer (they are a size that is manageable by one person) with room for storage of exhibition mounts on the side.

Other parts of the collection re-housed during the process of packing included furniture and folding screens. Our move (Re-housing continued on page 16)
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CURRENT MUSEUM STUDIES PROJECTS AND THESSES
Assembled by Dinah Houghtaling, Museum Studies Liaison

The RCWR supports individuals interested in and those who are pursuing Museum Studies programs. The appointed RCWR Museum Studies Liaison gathers and provides current information on Museum Studies programs and degrees offered in the Western United States. Throughout the year RCWR news is disseminated to students, encouraging them to participate in the committee.

The RCWR Quarterly is a great forum for students to submit articles and advertent their thesis topics. A summary is published of current master's theses and projects that relate to collection management once a year. The following abstracts were submitted by students from John F. Kennedy University and San Francisco State University Museum Studies Programs. The topics are diverse, representing current collection management issues in the field. If you are interested in more information about these master's theses, please contact the authors directly.

THESES IN PROGRESS:
Allison Akbay (aakbay@attbi.com)
John F. Kennedy University
Title: American Art Museums and Pre-Columbian Mayan Art: A Case Study in Collecting Cultural Property
Expected date of completion: August 2003

The purpose of my study is to inform museum community professionals and board members about the history and laws affecting the collection of cultural property by art museums in the United States and the use of museum policies to govern this collecting. The study will focus on the collection of Mayan pre-Columbian artwork as a case study to show in detail the history, effects, risks and policies that surround the collecting of cultural property. This information will be particularly relevant to museum professionals and museum boards who are considering adopting or revising policies on the collection cultural property.

Julie Holder (jewell@sfsu.edu)
San Francisco State University
Title: One Hundred Years of Silence
Expected date of completion: Fall 2003

I am working with a collection of antique photographs housed in the Museum of Man, San Diego California. These photos are from the Constance Goddard DuBois collection and represent San Diego's Native population from 1897 to 1910. Although this collection is well known by many scholars for their importance to San Diego history, up to the present, these photos have never been referenced with any documentation. The "who they are and why they were created," has remained a mystery.

Here is Julie's explanation:

Currently the books are two large research binders, containing the photos and accession information, never cross indexed prior to my work. I am also working with the support of the Museum in putting a photo book of this work together for general distribution.

In my research, I have discovered field notes containing information from a library in New York, which offers documented history and extensive reference information about these photos. The field notes contain stories, names, and histories similar to the Dubois photos, validating their direct connection between the field notes in New York and the photos in San Diego. That these collections have been separated for over one hundred years is only one of the important facets of this discovery. As my thesis project, I am developing two large research binders containing photos and accession information which can be used as a digital reference guide for future research. I have also created a media presentation offering an overview of the photos with music and short captions, to be used as an educational tool with a spoken presentation.

Jordy Jones (jordy_jones@yahoo.com)
San Francisco State University
Title: Grey Areas in the Black Market: The Trade in Afghan Antiquities
Expected date of completion: August 2003

Far from being a cohesive culture, Afghanistan is, and has been, from earliest recorded history, a heterogeneous and contested land. Its visible history is largely contained in the collections of the Kabul Museum. During the years between the withdrawal of the Soviets and the triumph of the Taliban, 70 percent of the museum's collections were either destroyed or stolen. Organizations were formed to acquire and hold surviving artifacts from the museum in trust for the Afghan people. The Taliban and the Northern Alliance both requested that created collections be removed for safekeeping, but UNESCO blocked the move. Its 1970 Convention prevented the removal of cultural artifacts from their countries of origin - even in the effort to save them. Most of the pieces were subsequently destroyed when, in March of 2001, the most radical factions of the Taliban determined that the museum should contain no "idolatrous images." The case of Afghanistan should alert agencies charged with preventing such crimes that inflexibility in the cause of cultural protection can destroy as surely as can neglect and indifference. Extraordinary situations require extraordinary responses. The 1970 Convention is due for retooling. There may have been no way to save the standing Buddha at Bamiyan, but there was a moment when the collections of the Kabul museum could have been salvaged. That did not happen.

Wendy Norris (wchaos@hotmail.com)
John F. Kennedy University
Title: Insuring the Weird and Wonderful: An Insurance Purchasing Alternative for United States Art Museums
Expected date of completion: August 2003

The purpose of my master's project is to inform art museum administrators of an alternative method for purchasing their institutions' insurance, including (but not limited to) fine art, property, and liability insurance. This master's project explains and analyzes how art museum administrators have traditionally purchased their insurance and illustrates how, through a group insurance program, they can leverage their buying power, decrease institutional insurance expenses and strengthen professional ties with other art museums in the United States. In summation, through rationale based on the formation of a group insurance program, I will show how administrators have a creative opportunity to reduce the cost of their institutions' insurance without compromising the amount and quality of their current insurance coverage.

Anel Rodriguez (collections@cartoonart.org)
John F. Kennedy University
Title: Plastic Fantastic? Proper Storage Techniques for Plastic Artifacts in Historical Museum Collections

(Theses continued on page 13)
BOOK REVIEW:
Kristen Schmidt, New Read Editor

There is no question that preservation is essential to a museum's purpose. Why collect, if the objects will be allowed to deteriorate? How do you exhibit objects that have disintegrated through the effects of time and environment and neglect? What is there to interpret, when the original source of data—the object—is gone? The question which Miriam Clavir asks in Preserving What Is Valued is what about an object—specifically a First Nations' object—is worth preserving?

Miriam Clavir based this book on her museum studies dissertation, after having worked as a conservator at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia. (She is now Senior Conservator there.) Her impetus was a request in the early 1980s from a First Nations member to borrow MOA collections objects for use in a ceremony. As a professional conservator, Clavir's code of ethics and ingrained values dictate that museum objects should be handled as little and as infrequently as possible. Clavir resolved to reconcile her deafty-held conservation principles with the needs of the public her museum served, and Preserving What Is Valued chronicles both her experience and the perspectives of the First Nations members in her area regarding museums and conservation.

The book details the history of conservation, dating from when it was known as "restoration," to the present, as conservators strive to preserve the physical and historical integrity of cultural artifacts by scientific inquiry and minimal interference. The whole concept of integrity is the issue at hand when dealing with objects made by contemporary cultures for their own use. Depending on the culture, minimal interference may not be strong enough—there may be a cultural taboo on handling by women, non-Natives, or anyone at all. In another circumstance, it might be necessary to make repairs which might change its "original" appearance, but make it usable, in order to keep its cultural value. In the traditional museum context, the tangible aspects of an object—its physical materials and structure—are paramount to its integrity. In a First Nations community, the intangible properties—the people, the heritage, the knowledge, and the spirit represented by the object—are what are considered its integrity, and worth preserving.

Clavir's analysis of the sensitivity regarding the collection of these objects centers around the conversations and correspondences with members of First Nations communities, some of whom are museum professionals themselves. Unfortunately, Clavir reveals that there is still a longstanding suspicion of museums among First Nation groups, and understandably so. In the past, access to their objects in museums had been partly denied to First Nations; it was seen as another manifestation of the effort to assimilate them into white society. (Clavir does not directly address the issue of pesticides and potential consequences of access to some objects today.) In addition, well-meaning museums collected with the notion that the objects must be preserved, because the people who made them would not be around much longer due to systematic extermination and assimilation. The implication today, as seen by First Nations, is that the cultures represented in a museum with anthropological collections and exhibitions must be "of the past." As Clavir's many interviewees can attest, not only are their cultures still alive, but many of their objects have "lives" as well.

Some of these objects—among them masks, baskets, and totem poles—only truly attain their significance when they are used. According to many First Nations members, no matter how sincerely the anthropologist curator cares about preserving the culture as well as the object, a traditional museum is unable to respect and interpret the object properly. Sometimes, a living object must be allowed to "die," only to be renewed in the creation of a new object: the cycle of creation and destruction, not preservation at all costs, is how a tradition is carried on and the significance of an object preserved.

Although one First Nations member, Leona Sparrow, saw the museum institution still as a "symbol of colonialism" and exploitation, not all have entirely negative experiences with museums. Dana Klashinsky, a Musqueam Band member of Kwakwaka'wakw and Salish ancestry, stated, because the MOA sought to collect and preserve objects of her family's culture, "The way I connected with my culture was through the museum. It was the place where I first started to explore my identity." Clavir is quick to point out that no definitive conclusion can be made from the attitudes expressed in the book, as individuals speak as individuals, not necessarily for the entire community to which they belong.

In Canada, more First Nations members have been entering the museum profession and conservation because they can see the value of their presence to the museum and its collections, and of the knowledge they can bring back to teach their communities how to care for their material heritage. According to Clavir, optimism is growing as museums or on an individual basis, as well as the Canadian legislature, have been addressing the past approaches to the museum/ collection/object/people relationships. Museums and First Nations have realized the mutual benefits of partnership: museums have more accurate information to fulfill their educational mission; First Nations have gained more access to their cultural materials. In addition, some communities, such as the Salish, have created their own cultural centers, where objects formerly "held hostage" by the government are available for display, use, and education within the community.

Gloria Grammer Webster, founder of the U'mista Cultural Centre, asserted, "Your job is to preserve these 'things.' It is our job to preserve the culture that those 'things' have meaning in." Despite the progress made in recent years, this continues to be an issue for First Nations. In order for all of us to do our job, we need to build on the dialogue that has begun, both in Canada and the U.S., to make available what is sacred, and to preserve what is valued.

*Term used in Canada to refer to indigenous peoples collectively.
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COLLECTION NOTES
By Vicki Gambill

STATE REPORTS
We encourage RC-WR members in all states to contact their state representatives with news of personnel changes, exhibits, grants, and any other topics that would be of interest to the RC-WR membership.

ARIZONA (Elaine Hughes)
The Museum Association of Arizona (MAA) meeting in Lake Havasu City (April 30th-May 2nd) was a great success with 116 attendees, half of which were from small institutions, a target population for the MAA. The keynote speaker was Dr. Stephen Olson, Assistant Director of the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City. His thoughtful comments about state museum associations formed the basis of many discussions afterwards. Other highlights included a presentation by Shelby Sanett of Amigos Library Services entitled “Pest and Mold Management: Ban the Bomb.” This was the highest rated session at the entire conference! Shelby did a terrific job outlining what to look for and how to combat biological agents.

Other news in the state is that Geology at the Museum of Northern Arizona has dissolved as an individual department. Dr. Barry Albright continues as the Curator of Geology and Paleontology, but Dr. David Gillette leaves his position in May. Janet Gillette, David’s wife, accepted a full-time position in the Collections Department as the Associate Collections Manager of Natural Sciences.

Holly Young reports that the Pueblo Grande Museum continues down the road towards expansion. With archaeology completed and the building site selected, construction begins this summer, and the new artifact storage space should be ready within a year. The Arizona State Museum is in the middle of Strategic Planning. The Western Archaeological and Conservation Center (NPS regional facility) has completed its move into a newly constructed facility at the Rio Nuevo Business Park in Tucson, AZ.

Riordan Mansion State Historic Park has been awarded a $3000 General Grant from the Arizona Humanities Council to bring in out-of-state speakers for our “Riordan Mansion’s Centennial Arts and Crafts Style Celebration” in June, 2004. Flagstaff Area Monuments received $25,000 to purchase cabinetry to rehouse Wupatki, Walnut, and Navajo National Monument collections that are repotted at the Museum of Northern Arizona. Jane Lakeman will be implementing the project.

The next changing exhibit at the Pueblo Grande Museum is a traveling show from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, Seguro: Popular Image and Cultural Icon. The show will be on exhibit from mid-December to mid-March. The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art presents Southwest.NET: Architecture and Design, an introduction to innovative work by architects and graphic designers in our region—through September 14.

The Phoenix Art Museum currently has the following exhibits: Bigger Than Us: Russell Crotz and Kelly McLane until July 27; Richard Diebenkorn, Peggy Moffitt, William Claxton until September 14; and Sculpture in Silk: Costumes from Japan’s Noh Theater, July 27—September 21. Becky Smith, Phoenix Art Museum Registrar, is happy to report that they had 205,000 visitors for El Greco to Picasso! The Arizona State Museum’s highly successful Avery exhibit has closed and a staff art show is slated for July. Currently on view through July 6 at the Center for Creative Photography is “The Drama of Pictures: Aaron Siskind’s Photography,” followed by “Margretha Mather and Edward Weston: A Passionate Collaboration” from July 9—October 12, 2003.

Several living history presentations will occur at Riordan Mansion through October including the Arizona Rough Riders on August 23rd. As part of the Flagstaff Festival of Science Events, Riordan Mansion will sponsor Mark Weber as John Wesley Powell on September 27th, “Galileo meets Dr. John Spencer” David Portree and John Spencer on Oct 3, and “Perdual Lowell and A.E. Douglass and Their Experiences in Northern Arizona” by Kevin Schindler and Rusty Tweed on Oct 4.

Now that summer is here, the Museum of Northern Arizona will host its annual Indian Markets. The Hopi Show will occur in July (5-8th), the Navajo Show in August (2-3rd), the Zuni Show which is also in August (30-31st), and the Pai Show in September (20-21st).

OREGON (Ann Eichergberg)
The Oregon Heritage Trust, a private non-profit organization with the mission of assisting Oregon’s local historical societies and museums, has designated its scholarship program as the Rick Reed Memorial Scholarship Fund. Read was an active member of the Oregon Museums Association and was well-known for his work with local historical societies and museums. He died in a climbing accident on Mt. Hood on May 30, 2002.

NEVADA (Sheryn Hayes-Zorn)
An American Association of Museums re-accreditation team visited the Nevada Historical Society in March. The staff spent several months preparing for the assessment visit. The Nevada State Museum’s (Carson City) current exhibit, Under One Sky, Nevada’s Native American Heritage continues through December 2004 along with contemporary art exhibit, NDN Perceptive, by Melissa Meloro through May 2003. The museum received donated funds to allow for the remodeling of the basket vault and improving storage conditions for the more than 1,200 piece collection. Two new PostPerfect virtual exhibits, History of the Steward Indian School and Goldfield’s 100th year Anniversary on the gold rush are based on the photography collections are on line at www.nevadaculture.org.

The Churchill County Museum & Archives (Fallon) is building a 6,750 sq. foot addition onto its present 10,000 sq. foot main museum building. When completed, the new addition will house a changing exhibit gallery, public restrooms, a new museum store and a children’s discovery center. This construction project will allow museum staff to rearrange some of the existing collection storage areas and create room for future acquisitions as well as allow an update of some of their current exhibits. The construction will be completed by July 2003.

The Las Vegas Natural History Museum (Las Vegas) celebrated Earth Day Nevada on Saturday, April 26th. An artwork collection by renowned local wildlife artist, Roy Purcell, was on display (through the end of May) and Mr. Purcell signed several books and prints. The Museum is also hosting a traveling exhibit, “The Tiniest Giants: Discovering Dinosaur Eggs” from June 7 through December 31, 2003. The exhibit documents one of the largest dinosaur nesting sites ever found. Presented in English and Spanish, this bilingual exhibit includes hands-on activities for children, actual dinosaur egg specimens, embryonic dinosaur skin, and displays about how a paleontological expedition is
Additions to the 2002-03 RC-WR Membership Roster

Please pull out this section and keep with your roster.

What do YOU want? Volunteer Registrars produce this publication for your information.

Suggest a topic! We are looking for suggestions for the following issues:

Winter 2004
Spring 2004

If you would like to see a particular topic covered, please provide your suggestion to the editor, Sara Ding, at 775-329-3333 ext. 258, or ding@nevadaart.org.
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(Thesis continued from page 5)

Expected date of completion: August 2003

The purpose of this project is to inform Collection Managers, Registrars, and general collections personnel working with historical museums, historical societies and historic house collections in the United States about proper storage procedures to promote the longevity of plastic artifacts as well as protect them from inevitable degradation. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to focus on cellulose nitrate, cellulose acetate, and polyurethane as the focus because of their inherent fragility. The information will help collections personnel to easily identify these specific plastics in order to provide premium storage conditions.

Melinda Simms (melindasimms@hotmail.com)
John F. Kennedy University
Title: Found in Collections: A step toward reconciling undocumented property in American historical institutions
Expected date of completion: August 2003

My master’s project examines the confusion that U.S. history museums and historical societies face in reconciling undocumented property—what most institutions refer to as objects “found in collections” (FIC). I am researching how past collecting practices in American historical institutions have contributed to the present problem of FIC objects; examining museums’ current procedures for reconciling their objects; and discussing the challenges of reconciling FIC property. The outcome of my research will be to create an action plan with procedural recommendations and research appendices for historical institutions that find themselves challenged by the task of reconciling their FIC objects.

For more information on these graduate programs, please review their web sites:
John F. Kennedy University, Museum Studies Program
www.jfku.edu/lib/hms/mems.html
San Francisco State University, Museum Studies Program
www.sfsu.edu/-museum/

For more information on all Museum Studies Graduate Programs in the Western Region contact Daiah Houghtaling, RCWR Museum Studies Liaison, djhoughtaling@ucr.edu

Kirsten Kvam (kckvam@hotmail.com)
San Francisco State University
Title: The Care of Color Photographic Materials
Completed December 2002

Color photographic prints, negatives and transparencies are among the most unstable of all photographic media. This is unfortunate, because color photographs have become an integral part of our art and culture. The goal of this thesis is to provide information appropriate to the preservation of color photographic materials. It presents an overview of the history, structure, and chemistry of amateur color photographic materials, as well as why and how they fade and how to slow the process of deterioration. The field of photographic conservation continues to grow and new information is constantly emerging. Institutions such as museums, archives, libraries, and historical societies should make an effort to teach the public how to care for their collections, because these may someday be in museum or archival collections.

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expose the packing of this collection, we decided to wait to re-house them on the other end. Many had flaking painted surfaces (especially the heads that are painted and carved wood) which necessitated as little handling as possible. These will be re-housed and stored three to an archival box, each tied to a Coroplast board with heads supported with Ethafoam and Velcro pillows.

Textiles were another part of the collection we decided to concentrate on after the move. Many items will be rolled, hung on rods or hangers, and suspended from a cantilever rack. We were able to acquire cabinets with many small drawers to store smaller textiles and fragments, which will improve accessibility since fewer pieces will be stored in each drawer.

After everything was safely packed and most of the collection re-housed, the 87 truck shipments followed with very little drama (luckily) which spread over 3 months. With 3 registrars, collections database administrator, move assistant and the tremendous help of local art transport company Ship/Art International, all the objects were tracked and moved from the old museum building in Golden Gate Park. The amount of time and effort that went into planning the packing process, choosing the materials, and figuring out every square inch of storage and gallery space was simply amazing, but well worth the effort. The meetings at the time seemed endless and sometimes needless, but in retrospect, they were absolutely necessary.

Now that the museum is open and galleries installed, we are all ready for vacations in far away lands. Some of us are there already, the rest of us are with them in spirit. After the rejuvenation process, we will gear up for unpacking the rest of the 8,000-9,000 objects. ☺

Peace.

Cathy Mano
Registrar
Asian Art Museum
Chong Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture
Opened in its new expanded facility in San Francisco’s Civic Center on March 20, 2003

(Re-housing continued from page 3)

Conservator worked with a team of volunteers to make individual Tyvek covers for 50 tables, chairs, cabinets, etc. Now stored on padded steel pallet racking, each piece is protected from light and dust and strapped to the shelving for earthquake stabilization. The sewing volunteers also made over 120 cotton folding screen covers which close down the front with Velcro. Eventually each cover will be labeled with accession number, object information, and ID photo for easy identification. The screen cabinets Delta constructed have four pull-out racks each and a screen is tied to each side making them fully accessible.

We were also able to improve storage and re-house our Indian miniature paintings, Japanese prints, and other objects on paper in preparation for the move. We decided on four standard mat/frame/box sizes for works on paper and ordered Hollinger tan aloha cellulose boxes for packing and storage. Individual custom boxes were created for our books, albums, and manuscripts which were previously stored in the same type of oak cabinets as the Chinese scrolls, also unprotected from each other and their environment. We created containers ourselves using archival corrugated blue board individually cut and folded to enclose and house each object.

Tibetan thangkas (paintings on canvas mounted on silk) were stored hanging in the old museum. This storage method stressed the fabric mount and we knew that flat storage for this collection was crucial for long term preservation. Registrars, along with painting and textile conservators, worked very closely with Delta to come up with a cabinet design to achieve this goal. Each thangka tray is constructed of Coroplast with steel edges and supports. They are easily managed by two people and glide into and out of their slots in the cabinets almost effortlessly. Each object was tied to its tray for the ride from the old museum to Civic Center and transported in carts that were designed and fabricated by Delta specifically for the movement of these fragile paintings. To house this collection we needed two sizes of trays, cabinets, and carts. This meant many trips with two carts, but it turned out to be the safest method since there were only about 140 thangkas total. Unpacking these was simple: take the tray out of the cart and slide it into its new cabinet.

As we began the packing process, we received a large gift of Indonesian wayang golek puppets. To
is doing a wonderful job. Amber Johns is the new archivist and programs coordinator. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and is breathing new life into the museum's educational programs. And lastly, Pam Wynes has accepted the position of events coordinator.

Sheryn Hayet-Zorn, Registrar/Curator for the Nevada Historical Society, will be on maternity leave from May 1 through July 13, 2003. As of this writing, Sheryn was expecting a boy, Isaac (Ike) Benjamin Zorn.

The Las Vegas County Museum of Art has some recent additions to its staff. Wendi Brown is the new Registrar Assistant, Exhibitions. Wendi was an intern in LACMA's registrar office a few years ago, did an internship at the

Met and is finishing up her M.A. studies at Cal State, L.A. Monica de la Garza, Registrar Assistant, Incoming/Outgoing Loans came from the Peterson Automotive Museum. Kristin Fredericks was named Program Coordinator, Exhibitions Department.

Therese James has been hired as Photograph Cataloger/Archivist at the San Diego Historical Society.

The Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, is very pleased to have four students from the University of Washington's Museum Studies Certificate Program, Laura Crawford, Marina King, Diana Matsuzaki, and Mindy Shreck, working on special projects for the Exhibits and Collections Departments this spring and summer.

Effective January 2003, Rosanna Sharpe was named Interim Director of Curatorial Affairs/Registrar for the Museum of Glass: International Center for Contemporary Art, Tacoma, Washington.

Congratulations to all!!

OTHER NEWS

It is with great sadness that we report the sudden death of John Broomshaw, age 52 (VL Class VIII) on Saturday, February 22, of a heart attack. John was the Executive Director of the Phoenix Museum of History.
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