



COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE
Texas Association of Museums

Collections Communiqué

Spring 2009

In This Issue

- From the Chair
- TAM Annual Meeting Update
- Nacogdoches Transportation Museum
- Collections-Related Sessions at TAM Meeting
- CMC Website

TAM Annual Meeting

March 17-20, 2009, El Paso

Looking for a job?

TAM Job Bank

AAM Job Center

Join CMC or renew your membership here

Have an idea for the next newsletter? Email submissions and photos by May 15 to

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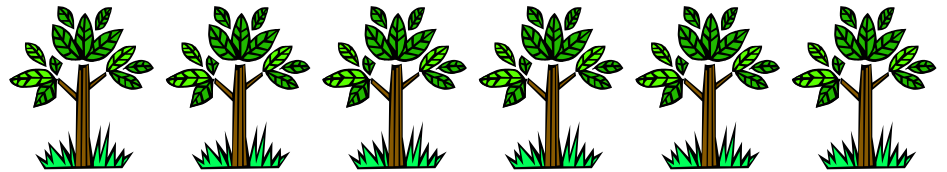
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From the Chair

Well, it's that time of year again. The TAM Annual Meeting is just days away. I hope to see as many of you there as possible, but I realize that many of you will not be able to attend due to the current economic climate. For those of you unable to attend we will have reviews of the sessions and workshops in the next edition of the newsletter. For those of you who are going to El Paso please be aware that there will not be a CMC booth this year. The space in the exhibit hall was limited and none of the affinity groups will have booths this year. This means that our only opportunity to touch base with the CMC membership as a group will be at our meeting during the Networking Luncheon on Thursday, March 19. You are not required to have a ticket for the luncheon to join us. Please feel free to bring your own lunch and catch up with your fellow CMC members.

See you in El Paso,

Amy

TAM Annual Meeting Update

Kathleen Stiefel

Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum

As some of you may already know, this year's TAM meeting will be a little different. One difference is that the TAM affinity groups will not have booths. The hotel has very limited space and TAM decided to go with the vendors that have purchased slots. I want to thank everyone that had signed up before we found out this news please volunteer next year. We will have our always-great handouts, give-always and drawings during our CMC meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2009, from 12:00 pm to 1:15 pm in the Ballroom. We really hope everyone can make it.

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I imagine our new CMC pins will be a hot commodity. Please make sure your membership is up-to-date so you can get a pin.

The Collection Managers Committee has generously sponsored the Opening Luncheon to commemorate the 20th anniversary of our affinity group. So let's represent the troops and be loud and proud! We have worked out a little surprise so be sure to make it.

Last but not least, I would like to announce the two CMC scholarship recipients to attend the TAM conference. The scholarship committee had a difficult time deciding the winners with such a large and exceptional group of applicants. Congratulations Lindsey Richardson and Jonathan Plant.

Nacogdoches Transportation Museum

Brian W. Bray
Historic Sites Manager,
Historic Preservation Officer
City of Nacogdoches

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Penney donated a safety switch in January to the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot. A safety switch is used to secure the position of the track at a point of switch. Mr. Penney worked for Southern Pacific Railroad most of his life and found the object a few years ago in Huntsville while visiting his son. He identified the object as a JP Neeley Safety Switch. The City of Nacogdoches has recently finished the restoration of the Nacogdoches Railroad Depot and plans are underway to create a Transportation Museum in the building. This object and others like it will be displayed in the new museum.



Collections-Related Sessions at TAM Meeting

Kim Cupit
Denton County Museums

Tuesday, March 17

9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
Full-day workshops

(C) Connecting to Collections: Collaborative Conservation

Are your collections at risk? According to the 2005 Heritage Health Index, 190 million objects held by museums and other institutions are in need of conservation treatment. This workshop will look at collaborative models for conservation, addressing ways institutions can capitalize on collections care. Breakout sessions will offer hands-on training in basic and intermediate materials handling, cleaning, and repair techniques.

9:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

(A/T/C/ED) Archaeology Symposium

Possession, Provenance, and Patrimony: Implications of the AAM Standards Regarding Archaeological Material and Ancient Art

Off-site/ El Paso Museum of Archaeology

What are the responsibilities of today's museum professionals who preserve the artifacts and evidence of the past? How has archaeology become an ethical hot button for collecting museums? Learn about AAM's standards for approaching archaeological material and ancient art and its anticipated implications for museums. Planned in symposium format with four distinguished speakers, this day-long presentation will bring together leaders in the field from the U.S. and Mexico. Participants will also take a behind-the-scenes tour of the El Paso Museum of Archaeology and hear about current work in the region. ***This program is made possible by the El Paso Museum of Archaeology and City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department.***

Wednesday, March 18

8:45 a.m.—10:00 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions I

(A/E/C/ED) And the Myth Goes On...More "Lies My Docent Told Me..."

Back by popular demand, this session will be a continuation of the 2008 "Lies My Docent Told Me" panel discussion. Join our now famous myth busting team of Susan Smyer and Jonathan Plant as they are joined by Hal Simon and Henry

Crawford in redirecting the free license that docents often take with history. Our panelists will introduce the topic, bring a few new myths they've dispelled, and then engage session attendees in a conversation about myths, why we love them, and how we can help make them go away. If you are looking to retrain staff, conduct research, or just have a great time this discussion is for you!

A/E/C/ED) Please Do Touch? Relaxing the Barrier between Visitors and Collections (Part I)

Sponsored by CMC, TAMEC, and HSHAG

What happens when curatorial, collections, and educational worlds all collide? Is it a delightful collaboration or a colossal head-butting? Find out at a double session designed to bridge the gap between collections staff and museum educators. This first session will start with a brief introduction to the idea of using collections for hands-on educational purposes and the philosophy surrounding greater access to collections. How do you balance ethical considerations versus educational opportunities? Are the two mutually exclusive? When is the right time to deaccession an item for public use? Be prepared for a lively discussion—audience participation required!

(E/C/T) What is it? What is it Worth? How to Value Historical Archives and Artifacts

From archives to linens and medical equipment to zithers, historical museums collect a myriad of items. The difficulty most museums encounter is evaluating and assigning a value to their artifacts. This session will address the appraisal process for acquisition and insurance purposes for new or existing collections; preparing an evaluation of items for an appraiser to use in valuing items; and resource and reference guides that are useful for the assessment of monetary values. A brief consideration will be the initial costs to preserve or process items for acquisition and long-term preservation. This session does not address art or natural science collections.

10:30 a.m.–11:45 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions II

(A/E/C/ED/T) Cultural Foreign Affairs: Mexico's Commitment to International Cultural Exchange with the United States

Off-site/El Paso Museum of Art

Museums throughout Texas, California, Arizona and New Mexico, are increasingly interested in bringing art and culture from Mexico to their communities. No other part of the world shares so much of the same history, politics, linguistics, and socioeconomic concerns. Yet many museums are uncertain about the complications of international transit, crossing borders, and the longstanding

bridges to success in collaboration that are already in place. Understanding may begin with knowing there is a strong commitment from the Mexican government to export its culture. This session will present information about the politics of binational and international foreign cultural affairs in Mexico and between the US and Mexico. One example to be presented is collaborative programming opportunities around the 2010 centennial of the Mexican Revolution and the Bicentennial of Independence of Mexico from Spain.

(A/E/C/ED) Please Do Touch? Relaxing the Barrier between Visitors and Collections (Part II)

Sponsored by CMC, TAMEC, and HSHAG

This second session addresses the practical issues surrounding the use of collections for hands-on programs. How do you successfully manage hands-on collections? What policies need to be in place? What educational benefit is there to this approach? Join our panelists as they discuss the “technical” side of hands-on collections, including deaccessioning, use of reproduction artifacts, tiered-collection management, security and safety issues, exhibit development, and more. Come for the philosophy and stay for the collaboration!

(A/T/E/ED/C/R) What is an Emerging Leader?

Sponsored by MELT

TAM welcomed a new affinity group last fall called Museum Emerging Leaders of Texas (MELT). The purpose of MELT is to aid in the training, education, and networking of new leaders either already in or just entering the museum field. Leaders will be defined by the twenty-first century definition which states that businesses succeed when employees are trained and encouraged to excel in their field and are encouraged to create and embrace new ideas. What is an emerging leader? Are you an emerging leader? Join in the discussion to reach a working definition and identify in-field leadership opportunities. A national figure in the emerging leader movement will facilitate this session and explore issues specific to the MELT audience.

12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m.

Opening Luncheon

The Collection Managers Committee (CMC) has generously sponsored this event to commemorate the 20th anniversary of their affinity group.

1:45 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions III

(A/R/E/C/ED/T) Bridging the Generation Gap

Today, four generations—Silents, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials/Generation Yers—form the staffs of most museums, bringing different approaches to workplace issues and challenges. This session will aim to: increase attendees' understanding of the differences among and between generations; provide strategies for improving communications across generational lines; and explore new models for leadership. By working to develop an active, rather than reactive, solution to the inevitable transition to come, members of the museum field will be able to work with the confidence that their organizational strength will allow them to respond to external factors, such as the changing political, economic, and cultural environments.

(C) Constructing the Three P's: Collection Management Policy, Procedures, and Plan

Following right behind your statements of mission and ethics come the collection trinity: plan, policy, and procedures. An experienced collection manager will define each of these and then identify the structural elements that support a collection plan, a collection management policy, and the associated collection management procedures, so that you will be able to build your own bridge to a proper, well-ordered collection management system.

Thursday, March 19

9:00 a.m.–10:15a.m.
Concurrent Sessions I

(C/R) The Cost of Collections

Registrars and collection managers are often in need of more money for conservation supplies, improvements for their collections storage, the care of the collections, or professional development, among many other needs. How can collections care professionals find creative ways to sustain the level of collections care that they want to provide? Participants in this session will learn how fellow collections professionals find financial support for collections stewardship without compromising the time and energy that they devote to collections care.

12:00 p.m.–1:15 p.m.
Networking Luncheon

1:15 p.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Off-site Sessions

(C) Stop or I'll Shoot! Firearms in Museum Collections

Off-site/Fort Bliss Museum and Study Center

Museums and historic sites with weapons in their collections, especially firearms, face unique challenges of storage, security, and transportation. This session will address questions concerning those issues plus registration, licensing, and demilitarization. A military museum curator will also discuss interesting and appropriate ways of exhibiting firearms in museum galleries.

(C/ED/E) Zoos are Living Museums? Of Course!

Off-site/El Paso Zoo

The modern zoological institution has many things in common with other educational and experiential organizations, such as museums. Aspects of operation common to both traditional and non-traditional organizations will be discussed, as well as some reasons why the use of live animals can be advantageous for fun visitor learning. Other topics will include what should be considered when planning use of live animals and plants in exhibits. This session will begin with a visit to the El Paso Zoo and a walk-through of selected sections.

3:15 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions IV

(C/E/R) Museum and Library Collaborations: Building Bridges between the Arts and Letters

Off-site/El Paso Museum of Art

Libraries and museums have been natural collaborators since their early inceptions. Our oldest ideas of museum programs emerged out of library viewing galleries and many museum libraries provide a major auxiliary resource for community library holdings. A partnership between the sister institutions often makes good use of limited resources, both financial and human resources. This session will highlight the community collaboration that resulted from the El Paso Public Library managing the extraordinary collection of books at the El Paso Museum of Art and the museum installing exhibitions of artifacts at the library.

Wednesday, March 18

9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
Feature Speakers

(A/C/E/ED/R/T) Challenges of Emerging Leaders: Professional Growth in the 21st Century

Feature speaker Mitch Menchaca

The new TAM affinity group, Museum Emerging Leaders of Texas (MELT), formed

to help its constituents navigate the challenges of being emerging leaders and developing museum professionals. The 21st century definition of leadership holds that businesses succeed when employees are adequately trained, encouraged to excel in their field, and inspired to create and embrace new ideas. This paradigm discards the “top-down” model of leadership and seeks to expand avenues of advancement and professional growth. How do emerging leaders recognize opportunities to gain experience? What are the characteristics of a nurturing workplace? Why is it important to learn from both peers and established leaders? How do emerging leaders make and sustain the connections that form an effective professional network?

(C) Challenges of Collecting: Standards for Provenance Affecting Museum Collections

Feature speaker Steven High

Building a museum collection can be complicated! Especially if a potential acquisition has an incomplete history. What are best practices related to questions of provenance and repatriation? How do you make certain that a gift to the collection is ethical? What about existing collections? While antiquities must be protected from looting, what about political “red tape” in retention and reclamation protocols? How will new national standards help? These are vital questions that will impact all museums.

(A/T/R/C/ED) Challenges of Small Museums, Useful Topics for Thriving Within the Borders of Being Small: Small Museum Roundtable

Most small museums share the same challenges and opportunities. Collections Management 101, ethics; successful tips for directors; TAM, AASLH, and AMA certification/accreditation; how to get your fair share of HOT Funds; fun fundraising ideas; and cultivating volunteers are presented to help overcome the boundaries that may come with being a small museum.

www.cmc-tam.org

Make sure you visit our website at <http://www.cmc-tam.org/>. If you have any suggestions or additions for the website, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Chris Godbold at cgodbold@fortbendmuseum.org.