



CURCOM

UPDATE

Greetings from your Chairperson!

CurCom is acting on your feedback. Earlier in the year, we conducted a survey about how you view your work as a curator. You also shared comments about what you need in order to work more effectively. The findings resulted in some exciting new initiatives.

Seattle 2014

Starting in Seattle we added early morning Table Talks to our menu of CurCom offerings. Each table had an invigorating group discussion about a topic that you identified as important: 1) shared authority for content; 2) the definition of a 21st century curator; 3) exhibition development; and 4) curatorial ethics.

Our Professional Network reception with COMPT, SMAC and L&M at the Pacific Science Center connected seasoned pros with emerging professionals. A shout out goes to Delta Designs Ltd. for being a continuing reception sponsor. The AAM Fellowship breakfast the next morning introduced many more new students to mentors who helped to expand networks both domestic and international.

We got an update at the CurCom business lunch about both the Excellence in Exhibition Competition and the Excellence in Label Writing Competition. Both were initiated by CurCom and have been expanding every year. As usual, the Exhibition Competition session at which the awards were announced was standing room only. The Label Writing Competition results were once again revealed in one of the most popular displays on the floor of the Marketplace of Ideas.

Thank you to the CurCom Board members and volunteers who contribute many hours throughout the year to make this happen. It truly does take a village.

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Throughout the Year

At the end of June, CurCom co-sponsored a webinar with SMAC on collections preservation for smaller institutions. On September 16 CurCom will co-sponsor a Town Hall webcast on *Art and Technology*. In February 2015 we are looking forward to hosting a webinar about exhibition label writing.

There are many great ideas that you can share about your work. CurCom is initiating A-Day-in-the-Life of a Curator project. We will invite all curators to share 3-minute videos in the next couple of months on YouTube.

Atlanta 2015

CurCom turns 40 in 2015! Come to Atlanta to celebrate and be inspired!

Ellen Endslo, CurCom Chairperson



CURATORS' STANDING PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF AAM

Chair	Ellen Endslo (2015) Chester County Historical Society eendslo@chestercohistorical.org
Vice Chair	James Burns (2015) Desert Caballeros Western Museum wjburns@westernmuseum.org
Immediate Past Chair	Linda Eppich laeppich@verizon.net
Secretary	Elisa Phelps (2015) History Colorado elisa.phelps@state.co.us
Treasurer	Cindy Olsen (2015) Curatorial Consultant cmolsen@gmail.com
Board Members-at-large	Stephanie Gaub Antequino SAntequino@PLANETHOLLYWOODINTL.COM David Kennedy Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center dkennedy@OKhistory.org Ron M. Potvin John Nicholas Brown Center Ronald_Potvin@brown.edu Stacey Swigart Please Touch Museum sswigart@pleasetouchmuseum.org

Regional Representatives

AMM Curators (Mid-West Curators)	Angela Goebel-Bain Illinois State Museum agb@museum.state.il.us Cindy Olsen (<i>see other listing</i>)
MAAM Curators (Mid-Atlantic Curators)	Nicole Belolan University of Delaware nbelolan@gmail.com Sheila K. Hoffman Université du Québec à Montréal sheila.hoffman@gmail.com
MPMA Curators (Mountain-Plains)	Elisa Phelps (<i>see other listing</i>) David Kennedy (<i>see other listing</i>)
NEMA Curators (New England Curators)	Darren Brown Beverly Historical Society & Museum dbrown@beverlyhistory.org Heather Leavell Peabody Historical Society & Museum heather.leavell@peabodyhistorical.org Bonnie Stacy Martha's Vineyard Museum bstacy@mvmuseum.org
SEMC Curators (South-eastern Curators)	Stephanie Gaub Antequino (<i>see other listing</i>) Nathan Jones General George Patton Museum of Leadership Nathan.c.jones.civ@mail.mil
WMA Curators (Western Curators)	Redmond J. Barnett Washington State Historical Society rbarnett@wshs.wa.gov Amy Scott Autry National Center ascott@theautry.org

Appointments & Committee Chairpersons

2013/14 Exhibition Coordinator	Stacey Swigart (<i>see other listing</i>)
2013 Exhibition Competition Judge	David Kennedy (<i>see other listing</i>)
2014 Fellowship Chair	Open
2014 Nominating Committee Chair	James A. Hoobler Tennessee State Museum Jim.Hoobler@state.tn.us
2014 Program Co-Chairs	Ron M. Potvin (<i>see other listing</i>) Elisa Phelps (<i>see other listing</i>)
2014 Ethics Committee	Sheila Hoffman (Chair; <i>other listing</i>) James Burns (<i>see other listing</i>) Nathan Jones (<i>see other listing</i>) Brian Peterson brianhpeterson@me.com
2013/14 Label Writing Competition	John Russick (2013) Chicago History Museum russick@chicagohistory.org
National Program Committee representative Atlanta 2015	Nathan Jones (<i>see other listing</i>)
Newsletter Editor	Rob DeHart Tennessee State Museum robert.dehart@tn.gov
Web Site Administrator	Allison Cywin College of Visual and Performing Arts University of Massachusetts allison.j.cywin@umassd.edu
eBlast Editor	Open
Membership Committee	Stephanie Gaub Antequino (<i>see other listing</i>)
Archivist	Open
AAM Liaison	Eileen Goldspiel Director of Member Engagement, AAM egoldspiel@aam-us.org

Editing and layout

Rob DeHart

Thanks to all our contributors and writers for this issue of *Update*.



Alleged thumb of notorious bandit John Murrell (c.1806-1844)

Perhaps the strangest artifact in the collection of the Tennessee State Museum is this decomposed thumb that was allegedly taken from the body of Murrell, who terrorized the Natchez Trace and Mississippi River Valley during the early 19th century. **What is the strangest item in your collection?**

**Future AAM
Annual Meetings**

Atlanta, GA
April 26-29, 2015

Washington, DC
May 26-29, 2016

St. Louis, MO
May 7-10, 2017

SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Update is the periodic newsletter distributed to members of CurCom. It is also available on-line at <http://www.curcom.org>

CurCom (Curators' Committee) is a Professional Network (PN) committee of the American Alliance of Museums.

All SPC members must join the AAM. Dues for CurCom (\$20.00 / \$10.00 for students) are payable in addition to AAM dues.

Membership is obtained through:

Membership Department
American Alliance of Museums
1575 Eye St. N.W., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

Phone (202) 289 9132; fax (202) 289 6578;
email membership@aam-us.org

CurCom at Seattle 2014

AAM Annual Meeting



CurCom Board meeting, Sunday, May 18 – left to right: Elisa Phelps, Nate Jones, Angela Goebel-Bain, James Burns, Cindy Olsen, Stacey Swigart, Redmond Barnett.



CurCom Professional Network
Reception Sponsor Delta Designs Ltd.



Marketplace of Ideas, Monday,
May 19 – Attendees viewing the
Label Writing Competition exhibit

continued on page 5



Marketplace of Ideas, Monday, May 19 – [from left] University of Washington, Seattle, Museology program student project managers for the Excellence in Exhibition Label Competition; Elizabeth Rudrud (2015), Kevin Bicknell (2014), Andrea Michelbach (2013), and John Russick, Director of Curatorial Affairs for the Chicago History Museum and competition organizer.

CurCom Table Talks, Tuesday, May 20



CurCom Business Lunch, Tuesday, May 20 - Cur-Com Fellowship recipients [from left] Noemi Tracy (University of Kansas), Johanna Blume (Eiteljorg Museum), Merrill Amos (Mexican Museum), Chhoti Rao (University of San Francisco), Bin Wu (The University of the Arts), and Chelsea Weathers (Harry Ransom Center).

Reflections on Seattle 2014 by CurCom Fellowship Recipients



Champion Museums. Nurture Excellence.

CurCom chairperson, Ellen Endslo, asked CurCom fellowship recipients to submit short reflections on their experiences at the Annual Meeting in Seattle. The following are three responses that show the importance of CurCom to emerging professionals.

Merrill Amos, Mexican Museum

Having heard so much advice on how to make the most of my time at the annual AAM conference, it was a relief to finally arrive in Seattle feeling more ready than ever to conquer the masses. Business cards tucked into the back of my name tag: check. Comfortable footwear: check. Snacks for the mid-afternoon bout of exhaustion: double-check. As a first-time attendee, I think the most intimidating thing about the conference was sustaining the confidence to continuously approach people and find a way to engage with them on one topic or another - after all, as a newcomer in the field there was something I could learn from just about everyone I was meeting.



I truly enjoyed the sessions I attended and came back to San Francisco with a lot of inspiration and ideas for the future, though I have to say it was the luncheons and networking events that I enjoyed the most during my time at AAM. Through the Fellowship, I was given tickets to the CurCom Reception and luncheon and I remember coming away from those events feeling so pleased with the people I had met who were so willing to share their advice with me and speak to me as an equal. I greatly look forward to my future involvement with CurCom and with any luck will be seeing you all in Atlanta!

Bin Wu, The University of the Arts



Bin Wu's AAM bag from the meeting at the Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses, China

As a graduate student originally from China in the Museum Studies Department at the University of the Arts, I was pleased and honored to attend the AAM's Annual Meeting in Seattle with the AAM Fellowship Award. Having majored in museum communication, I aimed at getting first-hand experiences on museum communication both internationally and inter-institutionally through the five-day professional journey to Seattle.

The Annual Meeting was far beyond my imagination and expectation. It was not only a phenomenal feast to my eyes and mind, but also a multi-colored gala shared with people from different cultures and backgrounds. I immersed myself in AAM's remarkable atmosphere of diversity and innovativeness by attending lectures, visiting Seattle

museums, learning from my mentors, making friends with other fellows, as well as communicating with museum professionals of all kinds from all areas in the world. Because of the support and devotion of institutions who take responsibilities to bridge Chinese museums and museums of other countries including the United States, I also met and learned a lot from museum professionals from key museums in China. The 2014 AAM's Annual Meeting was a mile-stone for my career in the field of museum communication.

When I started to say "See you in Atlanta" to the newly-met friends in Seattle, I realized that the Annual Meeting of AAM has become a family get-together for every museum professional who has attended or is going to attend.

Chhoti Rao, University of San Francisco



As a Master's candidate in Museum Studies at the University of San Francisco, this was my first time attending a museum conference and the American Alliance of Museums' Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo in Seattle this May, set the bar very high. Once I reached the decision to attend, made easier by the generous support of the American Alliance of Museum's fellowship award, choosing between all the interesting, diverse and exciting list of events, presentations and workshops was admittedly a difficult task and one I took many hours pondering over. Before even getting to Seattle I was first delighted by the Annual Meeting Mobile App, not only by its design but also its user-friendly functionality. At the conference, I was impressed by the vast number of attendees and the wide range of institutions present and I very much enjoyed meeting and spending time with museum colleagues from all around the world.

For an emerging museum professional, such as myself, it was an incredibly enriching experience to hear and learn from experts and veterans in the field. The thought-provoking presentations, the infectious energy and enthusiasm of the speakers, the engaging exhibitions and fun special events made the 2014 Annual Meeting both pleasurable and informative. My passion for museums and the work we do in them for the public was both validated and strengthened. Organizing the conference was I am sure an enormous undertaking and the American Alliance of Museums' board, staff and volunteers deserve our heartfelt thanks for their dedication and hard work. I look forward to Atlanta 2015!



Important Dates for the 2015 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo

Session Proposal Submission Deadline
August 25

Registration Fall Preview
mid-Fall

Housing Opens
January

26th Annual Excellence in Exhibition Award Winners

Special Distinction Honors



First Peoples, Museum Victoria **Innovative Integration of Design and Content**

Beautiful design built around content—clearly listened to their audience which was incorporated into the content; thoughtfulness of the tiniest design decisions

Design for the Modern Child, Philadelphia Museum of Art **Imaginative Design and Interpretation**

Design and straight-forward conveyance of interpretation with the opportunity to make it real in programming space

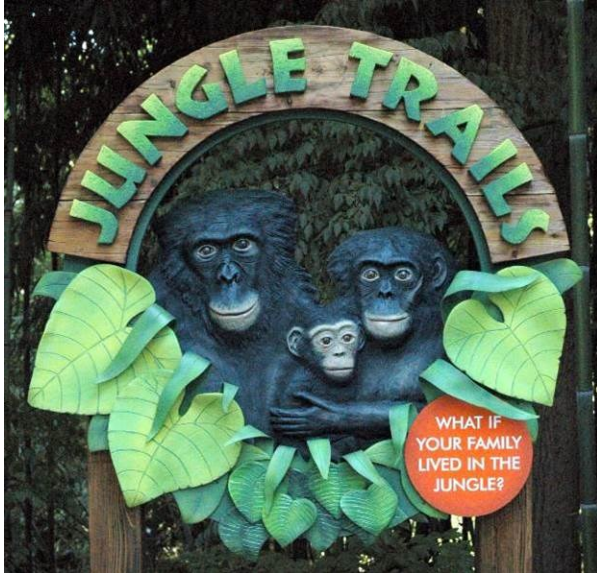


Nature Lab, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles **Outstanding Connections Between Design, Content and Community Context**

Engaging connection between design and content connecting nature in an urban environment

26th Annual Excellence in Exhibition *Award Winners continued*

Special Distinction Honors



Jungle Trails, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden **Exemplary Model of Creating Experiences for Social Engagement**

Ambition to engage in social engagement and listening to their visitors in creating a multi-sensory experience

Honorable Mention

Shop Life, Lower Eastside Tenement Museum

Connecting history to contemporary life with a commitment to facilitation

Call for Entries

2015 Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition

Submission Deadline: December 8, 2014

Excellent exhibition labels are clear, concise, and captivating. This combination is not easily achieved, and the writers and editors who craft the best label copy often go unrecognized.

The Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition is designed to showcase examples of outstanding label writing, identify innovative approaches, highlight best practices, and help us learn from one another. The competition cannot achieve this goal without a strong pool of entries.

Please consider submitting examples of excellent label writing and encourage your colleagues to participate.

More information, including guidelines and a link to the online submission form can be found on CurCom's website www.curcom.org.



The National Anthem, Remixed

Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Baltimore

On September 14, 2014 musicians from the worlds of hip hop, classical, and the vocal arts unite for an electrifying, new interpretation of our national anthem. The performance takes place at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore, MD and is in conjunction with its exhibition *For Whom It Stands: the Flag and the American People*. Exhibition curator Dr. Michelle Joan Wilkinson had the vision to include the performance as a related program to emphasize that there is not just one narrative about our flag and nation, but multiple ones. The performance is in conjunction with the bicentennial of our national anthem, which was penned near the museum.



The performers will use 15 untold stories about the anthem as the intellectual inspiration for their performance. The 15 refers to the number of stars in the original Star-Spangled Banner. One “untold story” is that Frederick Douglass enjoyed playing the violin in his free time. Legend says that he played the national anthem on it.

The musicians are renowned beat box artist Shodekeh, Baltimore Boom Bap Society, a group that performs improvised hip hop, and Classical Revolution, a collection of classically-trained musicians who perform classical music in unexpected places.

Additions to Nomenclature

It’s now easy to submit suggestions for additions and changes to Nomenclature. The new Suggest Additions/Changes/Updates page gives you a pick list for adding terms, changing definitions, and many other options. The entry pages include explanations and walk you through the process. All submissions will be carefully considered for the next edition of Nomenclature.

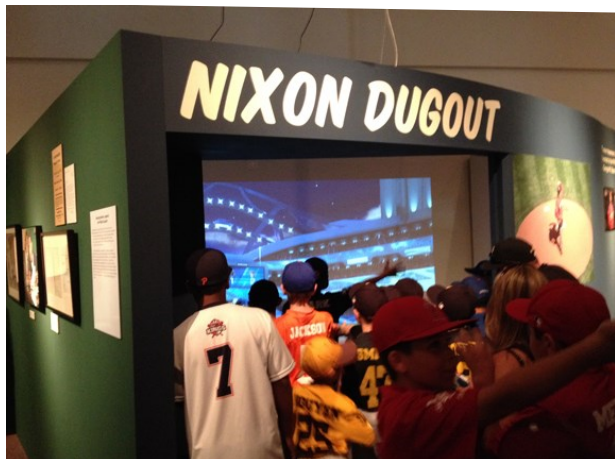
Go to <http://community.aaslh.org/nomenclature> and click on Go To Forms at the bottom of the page. That will take you to the Suggest Additions/Changes/Updates page where you can choose from the list of possible submissions.

If you have terms that you would like to see included in the next edition, please let us hear from you.

PLAY BALL! PRESIDENTS AND BASEBALL

Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

April 6 - October 3, 2014



On deck at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum is a new showcase that tells the colorful history between our Presidents and the game of baseball through rare memorabilia and one-of-a-kind artifacts.

Play Ball! Presidents and Baseball opens Sunday, April 6 at 1PM with ceremonial fanfare. All youth players in uniform and their families will receive free admission to the opening and will be the first to see the new exhibit, to be presented in the Library's 4,100 sq. foot special exhibit gallery.

Richard Nixon was a lifelong baseball fan. During his post-presidential years he wrote personal letters to some of his favorite players, and several will be on display for the first time. These include notes to Yankees pitcher Dave Righetti on his Fourth of July no-hitter, which the President witnessed in-person, Mets outfielder Darryl Strawberry with words of encouragement on a 1986 hitting slump, and a congratulatory letter to Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan on his Major League-record seventh no-hitter. Also on display is correspondence between Richard Nixon and Jackie Robinson on baseball and civil rights, video of the 37th President giving a New York Mets postgame TV interview, and the President's 1992 handwritten notes about his most memorable baseball experiences as a fan.

For the first time, visitors will have the rare opportunity to see documents from Major League Baseball's hiring of Richard Nixon to act as arbitrator during a 1985 salary dispute between the league and the umpires over the expansion of the post-season. Featured artifacts from other Presidential Libraries include a Babe Ruth signed ball to Herbert Hoover's daughter-in-law Margaret Hoover, Harry Truman's glove and baseball he used to throw out the first pitch at the American League opener in 1955, and a ball signed by Honus Wagner to one of his lifelong fans, Dwight Eisenhower. Several treasures will be on display from the personal collection of former Dodgers owner Peter O'Malley. These include an engraved watch presented to his father and former Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley by Congressman John F. Kennedy in 1952. In July 1950, Dodger President Branch Rickey had offered his shares of stock for sale to Ambassador Joseph Kennedy and he refused the offer to purchase. According to a quote by Walter O'Malley years later, Ambassador Kennedy's interest was to purchase the Dodgers and have John F. Kennedy be named as president.

The exhibition is included with regular admission. It is jointly presented by the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum and the Richard Nixon Foundation.

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August 2014



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