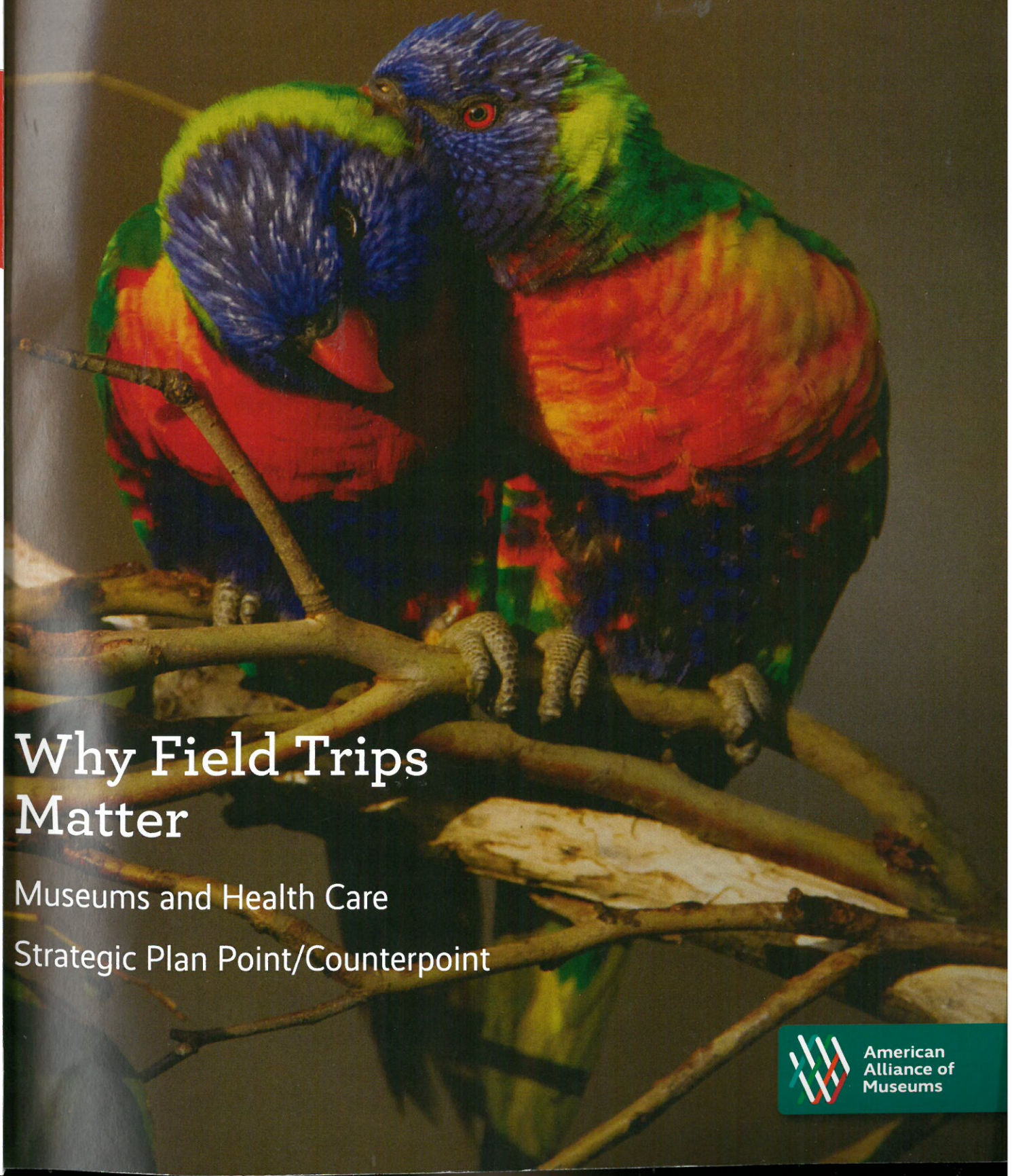


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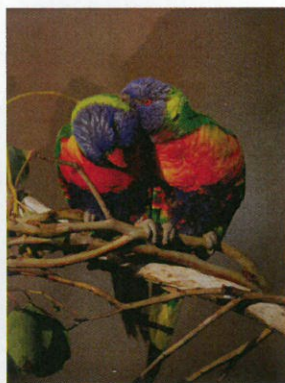
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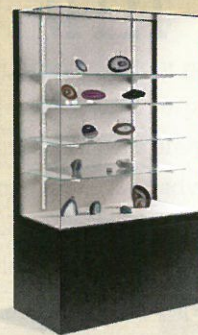
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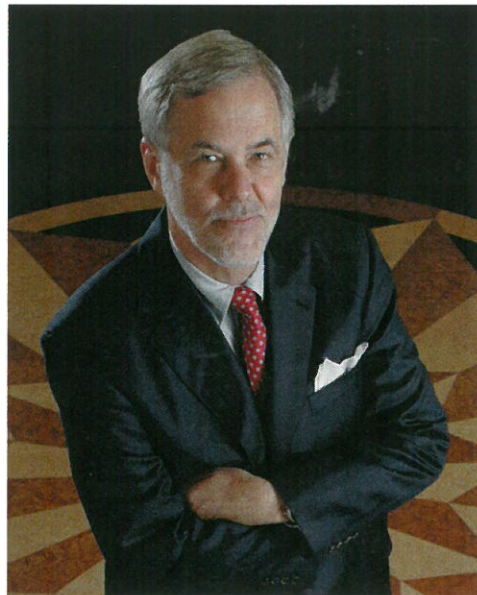
## Stories to Tell

**Next month, some 300 museum professionals from nearly 50 states will come to Washington to participate in Museums Advocacy Day.** When these committed individuals meet on February 24th for a day of policy briefings, followed the next day by a full schedule of visits with members of Congress and their staffs, it will mark the sixth edition of this event. It is hard to believe so much time has passed since museums and their service organizations first joined forces to create a concerted, organized effort to make our voices heard on Capitol Hill.

In those six years, we have made great progress. Overall, Congress is much more cognizant that museums are educational pillars, economic engines and community anchors. Each year, more members of Congress sign on to support museum funding and to back museum issues. And many frequent participants in Museums Advocacy Day report that they have formed genuine working relationships with their federal legislators, some of whom have visited local museums in their home districts and acknowledged the museum's public service successes.

Clearly, Museums Advocacy Day makes a difference. But it only works because of the energy, dedication and spirit of collaboration of all the state, regional and discipline-specific groups that lend their wisdom, counsel and, often, their wallets to this initiative. Without them, this growing movement would not have ever gotten off the ground. And this collaboration has extended into other ideas and initiatives, serving to make our field stronger.

In conjunction with this year's Museums Advocacy Day, AAM solicited stories from museums and members of the public detailing the great, as yet "undiscovered" advocates in their communities. Our objective was to find the "Greatest Museum Advocate," celebrate his or her story and bring that advocate to Washington to join us in our meetings on Capitol Hill. The response was impressive, and we received a tremendous number of stories—some compelling, some moving, all inspiring.



While Museums Advocacy Day is the tent pole of the field's efforts in this critical area, rest assured that advocacy is a 365-day-a-year mission. This is not to say that every museum professional needs to contact an elected official on a daily basis. But it is the work that all of you do that creates citizen-advocates like those we heard from, and they can be the most effective recruits for our cause. These are the most powerful voices for elected officials, at all levels of government. We obviously have a vested interest in building more government support for museums, but these self-motivated advocates can tell elected leaders about the immense value they and their neighbors draw from your work. And in the eyes of a politician, these individuals boast one undeniably important credential: voter.

So we urge you to in turn urge your trustees, your passionate members, your devoted volunteers to join our perpetual push to highlight the value of museums. Chances are your overtures will be warmly received. For your citizen-advocates, sharing their museum stories with elected leaders mirrors your own careers: both are labors of love of community and commitment to service.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ford W. Bell".

---

Ford W. Bell, DVM, is the Alliance's president. Contact Dr. Bell at [fbell@aam-us.org](mailto:fbell@aam-us.org).





## » IN BOX

### ANOTHER DISCOVERY

In "From the President" (November/December 2013), Ford Bell discussed Kristopher Helgen's discovery of a new raccoon species, "olinguito," from the Field Museum's collection, and ended with the question, "How many such discoveries lie in museum collections?"

I'm writing to share a similar story of discovery here at the EcoTarium. While doing research on the loss of plant species in Worcester County, Massachusetts, biology professor Robert Bertin of the College of the Holy Cross discovered in the EcoTarium's herbarium collection 56 species previously unknown to have existed in Worcester County. These specimens were collected between 1876 and 1938, allowing Bertin to document the loss of native plant species within the last 150 years in relation to succession, human activities and climate change. (See "Losses of Native Plant Species from Worcester, Massachusetts," *Rhodora*, Volume 104, Number 920, 2002).

It's the EcoTarium's mission to "inspire a passion of science and nature through discovery" in learners of all ages, and we were thrilled the collection could contribute to this research!

KALEIGH PARÉ, COLLECTIONS SPECIALIST  
ECOTARIUM, WORCESTER, MA

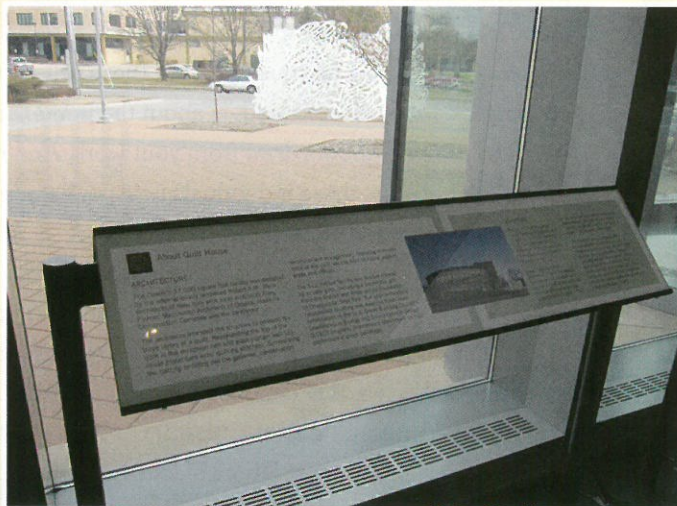
**CORRECTION:** The Media & Technology Professional Network's 2013 Muse Awards published in the November/December 2013 issue were the 24th annual awards, not the 25th.

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[dblanton@aam-us.org](mailto:dblanton@aam-us.org).



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72%

American adults who would rather spend money on experiences than things.

American Express, "The LifeTwist Study" (2013): <http://about.americanexpress.com/tc/lifetwiststudy.pdf>

2 out of 3

Millennials who say that museums are a "superior value" or "very good value" compared to other leisure activities.

Millennial Marketing (2010): <http://millennialmarketing.com/2010/10/marketing-museums-to-millennials/>

49%



Millennials who follow at least one nonprofit organization via social media.

Millennial Impact Report 2013: <http://www.themillennialimpact.com/2013Research>

\$855 billion

Direct spending on travel in the United States in 2012.

U.S. Travel Association (2013): [http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/07/5\\_7\\_13\\_Dow\\_Testimony\\_House\\_EC\\_Hearing.pdf](http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/07/5_7_13_Dow_Testimony_House_EC_Hearing.pdf)





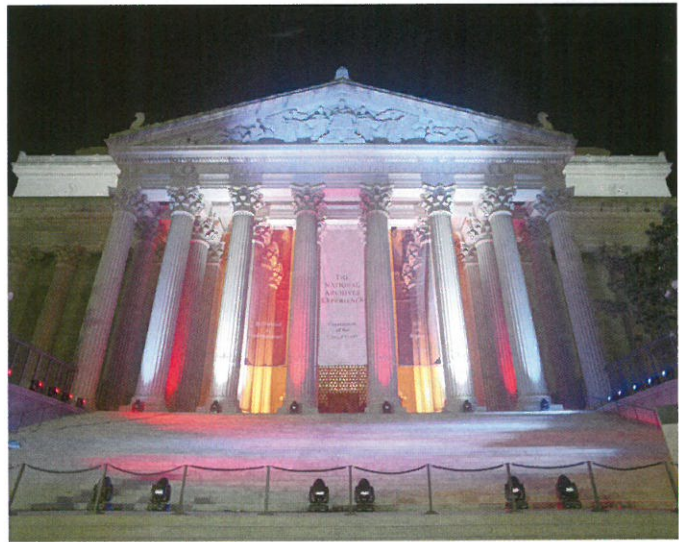
### Kimbell Art Museum

**Fort Worth, TX** | Star architect Renzo Piano's expansion of the Kimbell Art Museum opened in November. Dubbed the Renzo Piano Pavilion, the space is a companion building to the original structure designed by Louis Kahn. The new 101,130-square-foot colonnaded pavilion stands amidst a grove of elms and red oaks. Oak is also incorporated into the design, comprising two structures connected by two glazed passageways. The museum's new east wing includes two galleries with oak floors, walls of glass or concrete, and a roof made of glass and steel. Natural light streams through a scrim into the two spaces, which show works from the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. The second structure, the west wing, holds a new auditorium outfitted with bright-red seats, along with the museum's library, new education spaces and a smaller exhibition space for light-sensitive works. In addition to this \$135 million project, the Kimbell revamped its outdoor landscape, replenishing its four-acre site and preserving space for an open lawn dotted with greenery. More than 300 new trees were planted around the campus, including yaupon holly trees, which have long provided shade for museum visitors. For its part, the Piano building is energy efficient and topped with a publicly accessible green roof.



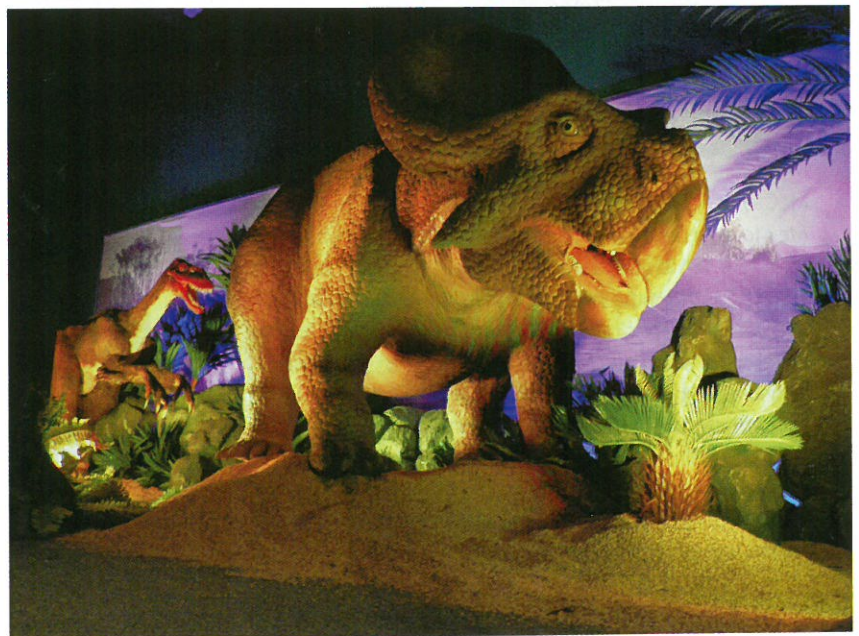
**National Archives**

**Washington, DC** | The National Archives, home to some of the United States' most precious documents, expanded this winter, allowing it to display even more of these seminal artifacts. A \$13.5 million gift went toward opening a new permanent exhibition in a gallery named for its benefactor, philanthropist David M. Rubenstein. The exhibition, "Records of Rights," lends context to the Charters of Freedom—the collective term for the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights—that is on display in the building's rotunda. Included are more than 100 of the Archives' records, including an original 1297 Magna Carta.



**Academy of Natural Sciences**

**Drexel University, Philadelphia** | "Jurassic Park" comes to life in "Dinosaurs Unearthed." Thirteen full-size animatronic dinosaurs, placed in naturalistic settings, swing their thick tails and bulging necks, opening massive jaws to show off rows of razor-sharp teeth. Jurassic Period skeletons, also full-size, and fossils—including an Oviraptor egg, Spinosaurus teeth and coprolite (dinosaur poop)—accompany these modern-day constructions. Visitors can control an interactive dinosaur at the Make Me Move station, while staged scenes freeze the giant animals in action. One, right, set in a Mongolian desert, displays the tense moments before a Velociraptor and a Protoceratops attack each other. To March 30.







### Newseum

**Washington, DC** | The Newseum is staying classy with “Anchorman: The Exhibit.” As *Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues* has done in movie theaters, the museum installation expands on the original 2004 comedy, written by and starring Will Ferrell as 1970s newsman Ron Burgundy. Ferrell and his on-screen news team’s costumes are on view, as are other key props from the film—Burgundy’s jazz flute, for example, as well as the whip used in the epic battle between rival

news channels. A recreation of the KVWN-TV anchor desk and set provides photo-op fodder; visitors can also do their best Burgundy impression at a “Be a TV Reporter” kiosk. To Aug. 31.



### Detroit Institute of Arts

More than a century ago, American cartoonist Winsor McCay preceded his short film *Little Nemo* with *Watch Me Move*, an introduction of colorful animated characters. The exhibition “Watch Me Move: The Animation Show” captures the history of animation over the past 150 years. Dozens of film segments provide a visual timeline of animation’s development across generations and cultures. Creations by Georges Méliès, William Kentridge, Tim Burton and other groundbreaking animators—as well as lesser-known works—reveal animation’s visual, intellectual and emotional power. To Sept. 1, 2014. Additional venue: Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville.

### Queens Museum of Art

**Queens, NY** | At two times its original size, the Queens Museum of Art reopened its transformed space last November. The building, originally constructed as New York City’s official pavilion for the 1939 World’s Fair, now spans 100,000 square feet. A \$65 million project, the 50,000-square-foot addition made room for new galleries, classrooms and spaces for public events, as well as a café and shop. A 220-foot-long illuminated glass façade anchors the side of the museum that faces Grand Central Parkway; the opposite side, facing Flushing Meadows Corona Park, has a revamped entrance and outdoor space. A spacious, skylit atrium connects the two.



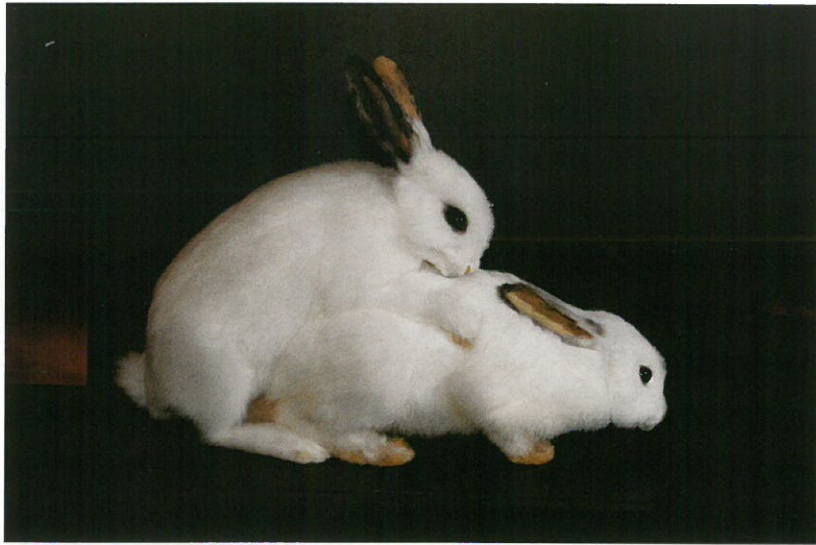




### Briscoe Western Art Museum

**San Antonio, TX** | Named for the late Texas governor Dolph Briscoe and his wife, Janey Slaughter Briscoe, the new Briscoe Western Art Museum opened to the public this past fall. The museum comprises two buildings and a courtyard and sculpture garden, sited on more than an acre of land. At nearly 38,000 square feet, the main museum building is within the former San Antonio Central Library, originally built in 1930. To prepare to host the Briscoe Museum, the neoclassical structure's main lobby was extensively rehabilitated; many of its original architectural elements have been restored. Inside, nine galleries are stationed across three floors, all dedicated to the art, history and culture of the American West. Featured are historic and contemporary works by Frederic Remington, the Taos Society of Artists, Maynard Dixon, Z.S. Liang and other artists famous for representing the region. The artwork is paired with a collection of artifacts—fine saddles and spurs, Santa Anna's sword and an interactive diorama of the Alamo, to name a few. Video interviews and listening stations allow visitors to hear the stories and songs of the West. San Antonio celebrated the museum's opening with a weekend celebration that included churros, trick ropers and a working chuck wagon.





### Cleveland Museum of Natural History

If exhibitions followed movies' rating systems, this one would be PG-13. There is some mature material in "Nature's Mating Games: Beyond the Birds and the Bees," a revealing look at animals' sex lives. Evolutionary biologists and animal behavior experts lent their expertise to this often-surprising examination of the nature of reproduction. The "Games" start with courting—rituals such as penguins giving gifts of pebbles to show their interest—and progress to the variety of ways that animals consummate their relationships. Exposing how our nature compares to animals', the exhibition ends with a consideration of human mating and dating. To April 27.

### Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens

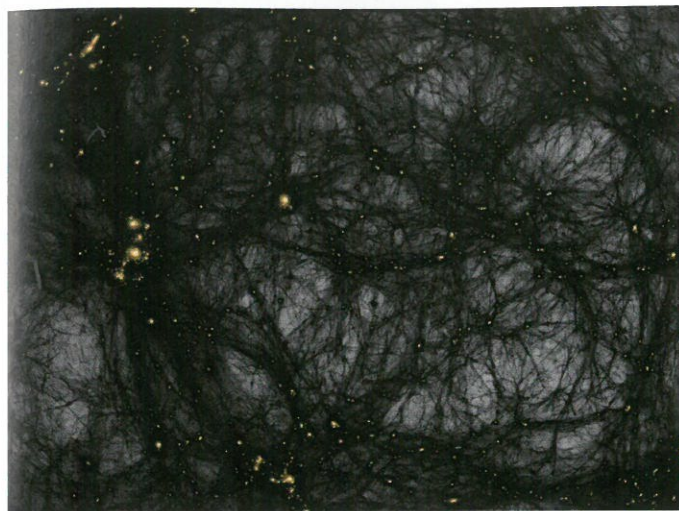
**Jacksonville, FL** | Making good use of Florida's warm climate, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens opened its new sculpture garden and plaza last fall—the finishing touch on a full landscape enhancement project. Launched in September 2012, the project also involved restoring the historic Olmsted Garden to its original design, as well as overhauling the museum's parking lots using eco-friendly elements. In the project's final phase, the entrance, crosswalk and café were expanded, improved and better integrated with the surrounding landscape, part of the Cummer's goals to improve the visitor experience and to merge art and nature.



### Farnsworth Art Museum

**Rockland, ME** | Seventy-five years ago, *The Wizard of Oz* premiered in theaters, dazzling audiences with its fantastic Technicolor tale. "The Wonderful World of Oz—Selections from the Willard Carroll/Tom Wilhite Collection" returns visitors to this dreamlike land of witches, flying monkeys and, of course, a lovable scarecrow, tin man and lion. On view are relics from the film—one of Dorothy's pinafores, a costume worn by a member of the Lollipop Guild and the Wicked Witch of the West's hourglass, among others—as well as rare copies of the original novel, written by Frank Baum. To March 30.



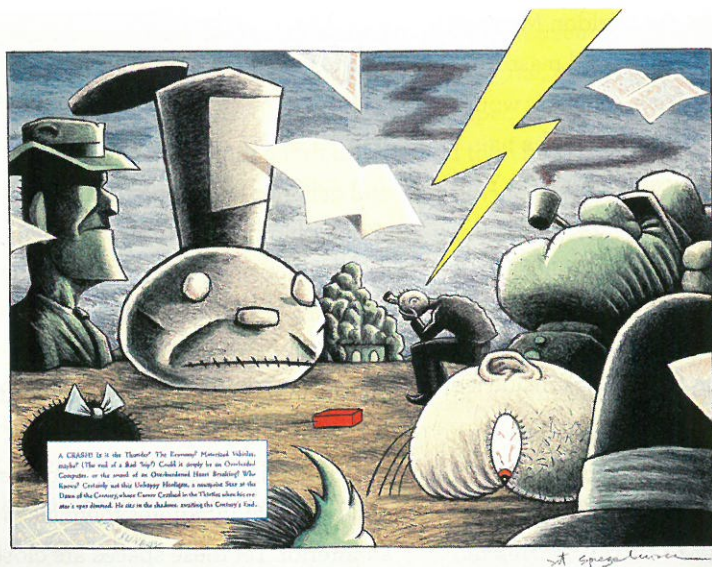


**American Museum of Natural History**

**New York** | *Dark Universe*, a new immersive theater experience, rockets viewers past the Milky Way for an exploration of deep space. Based on data collected by telescopes, supercomputer simulations and actual space missions, the film enters Jupiter's atmosphere by parachute before shooting to the edge of the Big Bang's afterglow. Interspersed with the stunning visualizations are groundbreaking discoveries about dark matter and dark energy. *Dark Universe* also visits the sites on Earth that have helped collect and decipher this information, such as California's Mount Wilson Observatory, where Edwin Hubble first realized the universe is expanding. On view indefinitely.

**David Owsley Museum of Art**

**Ball State University, Muncie, IN** | The university has added new galleries to its art museum, increasing gallery space by 50 percent. Funded by \$4 million in private donations, the expansion means that 500 non-Western art objects, including a selection of newly acquired works, can now go on display. The four new spaces established an east wing—home to Asian galleries that hold Indian, Chinese and Japanese works—and broadened the museum's west wing, where visitors can find art from Africa, the Pacific Islands and the Americas.



**Jewish Museum**

**New York** | Readers will likely recognize the name Art Spiegelman from *Maus*, his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel tracing his parents' survival of the Holocaust. In turn, "Art Spiegelman's Co-Mix: A Retrospective" traces the author and artist's own life and career. The exhibition begins, as Spiegelman did, with his work on underground "comix" before delving into the 13 years he spent developing *Maus*. More recent highlights include illustrations for *The New Yorker* and unprecedented collaborations, such as a performance with the dance troupe Pilobolus. Also included are preparatory sketches and drawings that reveal Spiegelman's scrupulous creative process. To March 23.



## The Bare Essentials

Going naked showcases a building and the essence of the museum.

BY JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO

### Going naked isn't for everyone.

Denuding a museum of its objects is a bit risqué, and possibly even offensive. Can museums get arrested for indecent exposure? Not literally, perhaps, though some certainly find themselves “arrested” in the sense of being predictable, mired in old habits. At the Sheldon Museum of Art, going naked meant breaking radically with predictability. It also meant being exposed, permitting vulnerability and undoing ourselves as a museum. Confidence was required—as were good architectural bones.

### The Occasion

“The Naked Museum,” an exhibition, took place in May and June of 2013—the 50th anniversary of the Sheldon’s landmark building designed by Philip Johnson, and the 125th anniversary of the Sheldon Art Association, whose predecessors began bringing art and art education to Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1888 and later funded the Sheldon Museum into being. For this combined anniversary the museum denuded all

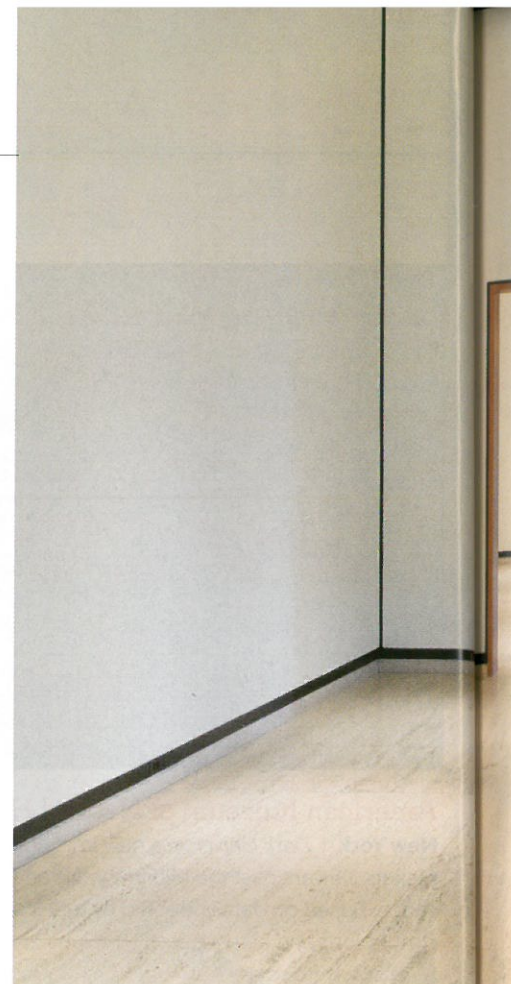
its galleries of *all its art*.

Going naked became a symbolic act, like a ritual ablution—a baptism at 50 and a renaissance at 125. A museum can renew itself through such an act, even reinvent itself in the process. Equally symbolic is the re-clothing of the museum, an opportunity to reinvest in its civic vitality and commitment to broadening its public service. That’s how we saw it. Our task was to imagine beginning the next 50 years.

### Why The Naked Museum?

Nebraskans love the Sheldon Museum, and with indisputably good reason. Its collection of American art is world-class. Its sculpture garden is the nation’s third historically, after New York and Los Angeles. For me, however, it was Johnson’s travertine temple to high modernism that first seduced me on my initial visit to Lincoln. It has the effect of making the artwork inside feel all the more glorious for residing in such splendor.

This was Johnson’s intention: to have the building stimulate in us an



aesthetic attitude with which to appreciate the art it holds. He used the most expensive materials he could lay his hands on. White marble-like travertine, quarried near Rome, for walls and public walking surfaces; bronze for all visible metals, including window mullions; auburn teak for all wood surfaces; and gold leaf for ceiling disks.

It’s long been my privilege to walk through the museum’s Great Hall and galleries and along the bridge connecting them at times between exhibitions, when the art is removed and walls are restored and bare—times when one’s attention isn’t drawn to objects in the room. I have marveled at the sheer dignity of the materials, the idealism of shapes and the grace of design that integrates them all as an interior. Yet these spaces are closed





The Sheldon Museum of Art with exhibitions installed, above, and naked, left.

to the public precisely at these moments. “The Naked Museum” was a chance to extend this privilege to the general public. It was an opportunity to celebrate an architectural work of art in our community as Johnson had designed it—as a monument to beauty.

### The Challenge

Modesty and moderation are virtues, but only in moderation. When treated as rules, they can plague the contemporary museum. Art, on the other hand, is an immodest act. Its destiny as art bespeaks its pride. Now what to do about this imbalance? Museums might exert a little hauteur of their own, at times, and a little ribaldry, at other times—then modesty can take a holiday. Everyone will see it that way, right?

Well, when our board president announced my plans for “The Naked Museum” to the full board, one member volleyed back that he was “horrified” at the prospect of having no art in the museum. This was a member who had been a reliable champion of other museum innovations. As you can imagine, it was dismaying to hear this, especially from a friendly supporter. I then had the unenviable task of having to roll out the idea defensively rather than happily—beginning, as I perceived it, with a deficit of sympathy from the board.

I agreed that having no art would be counterintuitive to the work of an art museum. And I explained that stowing away our artwork wouldn’t mean having no art on display. That actually our aesthetic focus would turn to the

biggest work of art at Sheldon: the Sheldon itself. And that we would open our galleries to the many muses, the other arts, inviting them back home, which is the *museum*. We would have dance, music, comedy, tragedy, poetry and history, and propose new muses for architecture and performance art—all in the galleries.

I invoked the New York Guggenheim as precedent, which had emptied its rotunda for its own 50th anniversary and invited Tino Sehgal to stage two performance pieces in the space. Ours would differ as an exhibition about architecture and in vacating *all* our galleries. I offered to keep the run of the show short, about six to eight weeks. And we would be able to hold our gala in the galleries, something we’d never done.

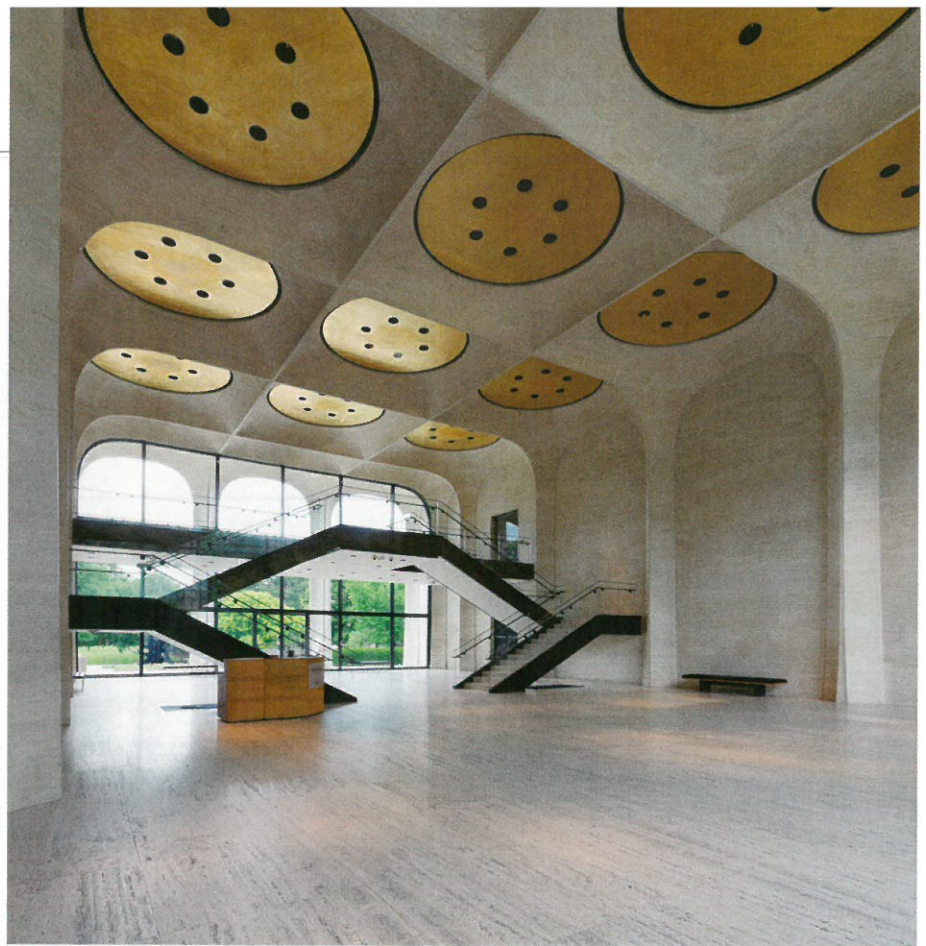


The latter seemed to resonate with some members. Ideas flowed freely. No further objection was raised. What I didn't know then was the extent of the skepticism harbored among museum constituents about the project. Only after the many successes of various events—including the most talked-about gala in Nebraska, *The Naked Museum Party*, and a *Wall Street Journal* story on the museum—did members confide in me their initial reservations and their subsequent pleasure with the way it all turned out. This tells me how important it was to have built trust among board and community constituents. A track record of success is the foundation of trust.

### The Argument

We made a case for the ways in which the Sheldon is like a work of art:

1. It's made of bronze, gold leaf, teak and handcrafted Italian travertine.
2. It extols art's basic elements—color, shape, form, line, texture and value.
3. Like geometric abstraction, it uses ideal shapes: circles, rectangles and squares.
4. It displays secondary elements: formal harmonies, patterns, rhythms and symmetries.
5. Fusing different styles—the classicism of ancient Greek and Roman architecture, hints of Gothic cathedrals and Islamic mosques, and the reductive minimalism of 1960s art—this historical pastiche prefigures postmodernism in art and architecture.



Going naked showcased the Sheldon Museum of Art's striking architectural elements.

6. The building's lines are elegant, long and slender.

7. The hardness of its materials and the softness of its curves create internal tension, a quality of all good art.

### Naked but Not Bare

One idea was to stage a bustling bazaar or marketplace, in the old-world sense, within our labyrinth of six permanent collection galleries—a mini version of Istanbul's Grand Bazaar—for a two-week period. We called it the Marketplace of Community Values.

In it, instead of chancing upon wares to buy, one encountered lively exchanges from the worlds of art, diverse cultures and social services. This was a showcase for community

organizations whose missions complement the public trust, values and service of any museum. To create the marketplace we invited twelve nonprofits to occupy the six galleries, two per gallery, and commissioned six nationally acclaimed artists to facilitate their presentations.

The groups included Aging Partners, the Asian Community and Cultural Center, Cedars Youth Services, CenterPointe (mental health, substance abuse), Community Crops (resource sustainability), El Centro de las Américas, Lincoln Indian Center, Nebraska Appleseed (legal justice), Lincoln Literacy, Clyde Malone (African American) Community Center, the Nebraska Commission



for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and St. Monica's Behavioral Health Services for Women.

The museum visitor could walk through the creative presentations and be dazzled by the wealth of services available to the community, by the necessary inventiveness inherent to social service, and by the sensitivity of artists whose commitment to civic engagement catalyzed the connection between art museum and public trust.

Essentially we opened up the most sanctified spaces of the museum to the voices of the community. In the process the art museum revealed its alignment with the civic function of democratic society—public service. A vital aspect of its social relevance was exposed.

By making the museum more open and accessible, friendlier and more useful to those who may have been suspicious of its elite status, we gained good will among nontraditional audiences who now want to return to see the art.

### The Preconception

What had been unfathomable to some was the thought of their beloved museum denuded of its art. This mis-giving divulged a preconception: that objects are the rightful placeholders of art. That art resides in things.

The lesson we stood to learn was that *art is an experience of things*. Hence the appreciation of fine building materials arranged through

architectural design could deliver an experience comparable to that of objects we more typically associate with art.

What was denuded—partially, provocatively, maybe even annoyingly—in the course of “The Naked Museum” was this preconception about art. We were all exposed, as much as the museum was. But we were also exposed to new ways of thinking about art.

## We opened up the most sanctified spaces of the museum to the voices of the community.

The transition from preconception to new conception went like this: that we think about the building as we would other objects, recognizing in architectural space the known qualities of art. This was a middle ground between object-oriented and experiential thinking about art.

### Consequences

Opening the museum to the public in a vulnerable state—when we have nothing to show on our walls but the walls themselves, no sculpture on the floor but the travertine stone of the

floor itself—is to expose one's museum as an operation subject to fundamental scrutiny.

That is to say, if we risk going bare, if we invite skepticism from those who can't imagine an objectless museum, we open ourselves to the question: Are we principally a warehouse for aesthetic goods? Certainly we were—in passing through our adolescent phase of museum history. Now we must assert ourselves as poised to rethink

old habits and explore new paths in shaping what a museum can be for its diverse communities.

Countless new visitors came to the Sheldon during this period. From California to Florida to Canada, visitors announced that they had come to Nebraska to see “The Naked Museum.” It turns out that going naked is for everyone. ‹‹

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*Jorge Daniel Veneciano is director, Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, Nebraska.*



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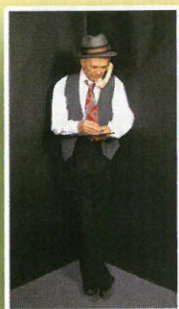


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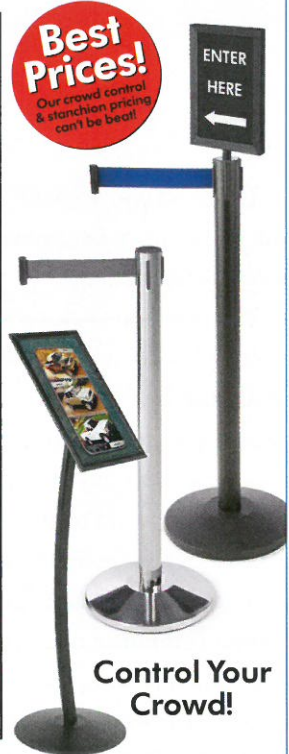
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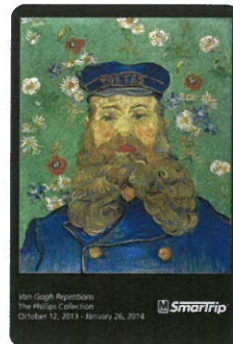
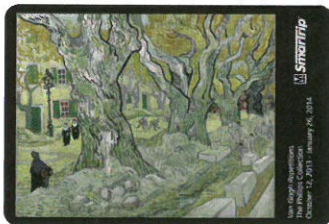
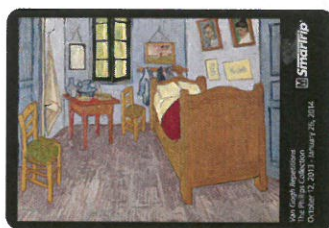


### Name That Panda

Giant panda mom Mei Xiang brought her female baby panda into the world on August 23 at Washington, DC's National Zoo, to the delight of zoo staff, visitors and panda fans around the globe. According to Chinese tradition, a new life is celebrated with a name 100 days after birth, in this case, December 1, 2013. But in a social-media twist, the zoo turned to crowdsourcing for the baby panda's name. Voting was conducted via the zoo's website, with five Chinese names to choose from: Bao Bao ("precious, treasure"), Ling Hua ("darling, delicate flower"), Long Yun ("charming dragon"), Mulan (after the woman warrior popularized by the Disney film) and Zhen Bao ("treasure, valuable"). The names were submitted by the U.S. and Chinese ambassadors, and by keepers from the National Zoo and China's Wolong Panda Reserve, where the baby panda will move at age 4. Taking full advantage of the panda's immense popularity, National Zoo organizers held a public naming ceremony on December 1. The winning name: Bao Bao. She makes her public debut in January at the zoo's David M. Rubenstein Family Giant Panda Habitat.



### Go with Van Gogh



Washington, DC's Phillips Collection has come up with a unique way to get a little bit of its blockbuster Van Gogh exhibit ("Van Gogh Repetitions," through January 26) into the hands of the region's commuters. Four paintings from the exhibit now grace Metro's 3-1/2- by 2-inch plastic fare cards known as the "SmarTrip." While rushing to and from their offices, or even while stuck on trains during the inevitable delays, Metro riders can contemplate the glories of *The Bedroom at Arles*, *The Road Menders*, *Madame Roulin Rocking the Cradle* or *The Postman Joseph Roulin*. With more than 200 million trips annually, Metro gives the Phillips some major PR potential with the attractive cards, while the Phillips gets behind the greener option of public transportation to its Dupont Circle location. And even better: flash your Van Gogh SmarTrip at the Phillips door and get \$3 off admission and 20 percent off gift shop purchases.

### Making History

People make history. Why not let them make a history exhibit, too? That may have been what the venerable Chicago History Museum (CHM) had in mind when it partnered with a local NBC affiliate to host the first ever Chicago History Bowl. Chicagoans were invited to submit ideas for an exhibit at the museum, then vote on the finalists in four rounds of a bracket-style tournament. In round two of voting in late November, categories included weather (the deadly heat wave of '95 was a candidate), culinary (the Old Rose Distillery of the Prohibition Era) and sports (the ivy-covered walls of Wrigley Field). Voters were eligible to win a weekend for two at Chicago's Palmer House as well as a free CHM membership. Final round voting ended on December 15—too late for this edition; check the CHM website for the champion: [chicagohistory.org](http://chicagohistory.org). The history bowl was thought to be a historic first: crowdsourcing to generate ideas and eventually a museum exhibition—not to mention lots of local interest. Crowdsourcing is also crowd-pleasing.

—John Strand







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*2011 Congressional Management Foundation survey of Congressional staff*

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# How can my museum avoid tax-filing pitfalls?

BY CHARLOTTE A. MONTGOMERY

The Internal Revenue Service's Exempt Organization Division is busy with various types of compliance projects that could impact nonprofit museums that unwittingly file the IRS Tax Return Form 990 and Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return Form 990-T with red flags.

## Form 990 Indicators

The Form 990 was substantially redesigned to collect more data in an effort to increase transparency and improve compliance. The IRS is using this information to develop noncompliance indicators that would red-flag a nonprofit for further examination. When completing and/or reviewing an organization's 990, it is critical to be aware of these indicators and address any issues prior to filing the return. The following are indicators:

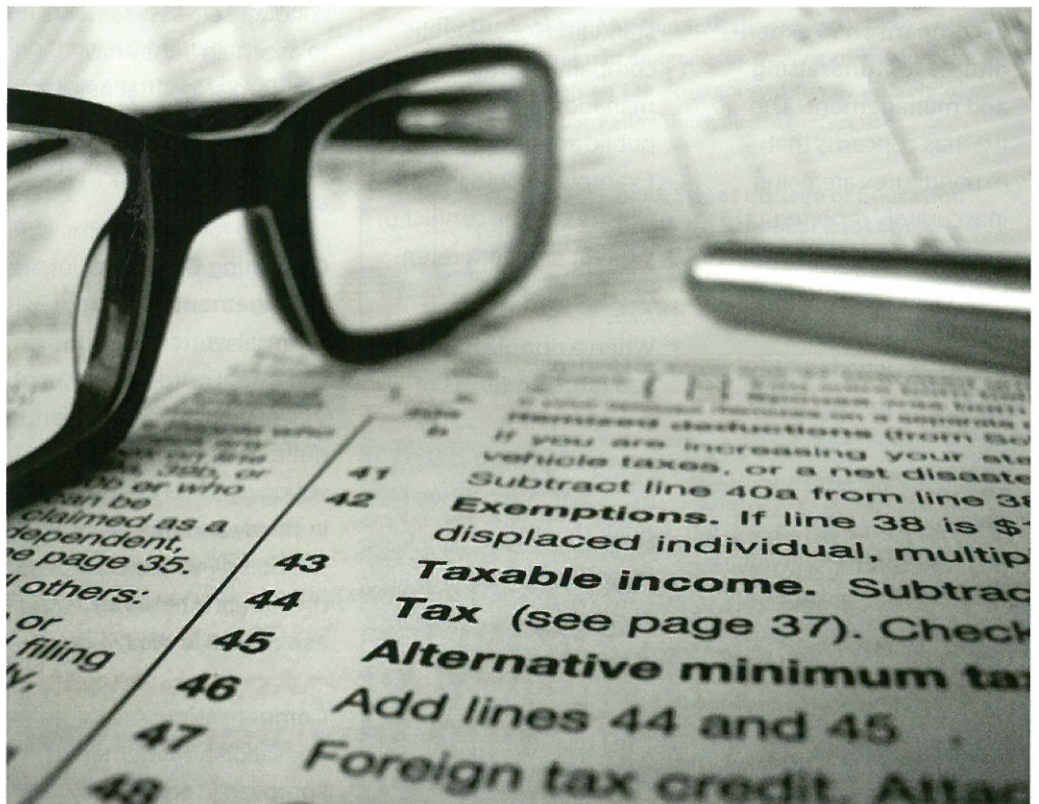
- **When unrelated business income (UBI) is reported for three consecutive years, but no income tax**

**is due for those same years.** The IRS would be concerned that the nonprofit may not be accurately reporting sources of the income or is inaccurately allocating expenses associated with the UBI. The nonprofit should document the methodology used to

allocate the direct costs of the UBI, and review the sources of the income to verify that they should be reported as UBI.

- **When compensation to all officers, directors, trustees and key employees is low as compared to annual**

**gross receipts.** Nonprofit organizations may think only high compensation levels are reviewed. The IRS, however, thinks that some nonprofits may be circumventing the goal of transparency by hiding compensation levels in other expenditures in order to report low





compensation on 990s. Organizations should document the process for establishing compensation levels and the sources used for comparative analysis to avoid excessive compensation concerns.

- **When expenditures for program services are low in comparison to expenditures for fundraising and management.** The IRS has concerns that expenditures are being inaccurately reported or that the organization is not complying with their mission statements as provided when exemption was granted. Organizations should review expenditures to verify that allocations among fundraising, management and programs accurately reflect the activities of the nonprofit.
- **When a large amount of fundraising income is reported with little or no fundraising expenses.** The IRS is finding that fundraising expenses are being inaccurately reported as program expenses, perhaps in an effort to avoid a negative impact on the ratio of fundraising to programs.

- **When the nonprofit answers “no” when asked if the 990 is distributed to all board members.**
- **When the organization does not have policies required under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.** This federal law enhanced standards for all public company boards, and management and public accounting firms. Examples would include whistle blower, conflict of interest or record retention policies.
- **When a nonprofit has large amounts of funds in a foreign bank account.** The IRS could be concerned about a lack of discretion and limited control over funds abroad.

### Governance Check Sheet

To further assist in their examinations, the Internal Revenue Service has developed a Governance Check Sheet ([http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/governance\\_check\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/governance_check_sheet.pdf)). Exempt Organization Revenue Agents use the check sheet in the examination of 501(c)(3) charities to target those red-flag areas. The check sheet covers the areas of Governing Body and Management,

Compensation, Organizational Control, Conflict of Interest, Financial Oversight and Document Retention. Many of the questions also appear on IRS Form 990. With increased scrutiny by federal and state regulators and the general public, nonprofits should conduct self-assessments to ascertain if they have problem areas that need to be addressed. Major considerations for each section are as follows:

**Governing Body and Management:** Is there a formal written mission statement? Are there bylaws that establish composition, duties, qualifications and voting rights of the governing body and officers? Did the board meetings satisfy the meeting requirements as set forth in the bylaws?

**Compensation:** Are compensation arrangements approved in advance by an authorized body composed of individuals with no conflict of interest? Are there comparability data for compensation decisions? What is the source of the comparability data?

**Organizational Control:** Are there any voting board members with a family relationship and/or outside business relationship

with any other voting or non-voting board member, officer, trustee, director or key employee? Are these disclosed and known to the governing body? Does control rest with one person or with a select few individuals?

**Conflict of Interest:** Is there a formal, written conflict of interest policy? Does the policy address recusals? Does the policy require written disclosure?

**Financial Oversight:** Are there systems and procedures in place to verify assets are used in keeping with the nonprofit's mission? How often was the board provided with written financial reports and how often were these reports discussed? Was the 990 reviewed by the full board and/or designated committee? Did an independent accountant prepare a report for the board? Did an independent accountant prepare a management letter for the board?

**Document Retention:** Does the organization have a written policy for document retention and destruction? Does the board contemporaneously document its meeting and retain this documentation?



**The Governance Check Sheet** is a helpful tool for nonprofit organizations to evaluate governance policies and their effectiveness.

### Employee or Contractor

The Internal Revenue Service is also conducting worker classification audits to ensure that nonprofits are not skirting employment taxes by misclassifying employees as independent contractors. Many organizations now outsource duties previously conducted by full-time employees and are erroneously classifying them as independent contractors. The IRS uses fact and circumstance analysis to determine proper classification.

- **Behavioral Control** covers facts that show whether the business has a right to direct or control how the work is done through instructions, training or other means.
- **Financial Control** covers facts that show whether the business has a right to direct or control the financial and business aspects of the worker's job.
- **Type of Relationship** relates to how the workers and the business owner perceive their relationship.

A good rule of thumb is if the organization has the right to control or direct not only what is to be done, but how it is to be done, then the workers are most likely employees. If the organization can direct or control only the result of the work done—and not the means and methods of accomplishing the result—then the workers are probably independent contractors.



This article does not cover the full scope of what the IRS looks for when examining a nonprofit museum. It does, however, reflect the current work plan of the IRS Exempt Organization Division. Nonprofits should conduct a self assessment now so they can feel confident that an IRS examination will yield no surprises. <<

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*Charlotte A. Montgomery is a Certified Public Accountant and director of resource allocation, Illinois State Museum, Springfield.*

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**“Thank you for arranging this workshop. It’s so important to take time out and really think long and hard about tools and strategies with the support of successful colleagues in the field. For all that, it was invaluable.”**

*—Anita Sheth, participant, Museum Career Lab, New York City*

# Professional Development Calendar 2014

## JANUARY

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Live webinar: **Digital Communities, Education, Public Outreach\*** (Jan. 15)

Career webcast: **Networking for You and the Field\*\*** (Jan. 22)

Online Town Hall: **State of the Alliance with Ford Bell** (Jan. 29)

## FEBRUARY

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Live webinar: **Games, Online, AR, Video/Film and Animation\*** (Feb. 12)

Live webcast: **Effective Public Speaking** (Feb. 19)

**Museums Advocacy Day** (Feb. 24–25)

## MARCH

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Career webcast: **Careers in Museum Education** (March 5)

EdCom “One Good Thing” webcast: **Museum-Community Partnerships** (March 12)

Live webcast: **Effective Presentations** (March 19)

## APRIL

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Online Town Hall: **TrendsWatch 2014** (April 17)

## MAY

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Live webcast: **First-Time Annual Meeting Attendees Welcome** (May 7)

**CEOs Symposium (invitation-only event)** (May 18–19)

**Annual Meeting 2014** (May 18–21)

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Kids try out a microscope at the Uni Project, which transforms urban spaces into public learning venues—and could provide a model for science and natural history museums.

## STEM for All

Unconventional approaches can extend the reach of science and natural history museums.

BY WINIFRED KEHL

I love science and natural history museums. There are some things you just can't experience anywhere else—a hall of giant dinosaur skeletons towering over you, or an interactive exhibit about tornados or Tesla coils. But museums have one major downside when it comes to public access: they exist in a physical location. You need to get yourself there. The travel (whether one hour on a city bus or three hours in a plane) plus costs like admission and parking can put museums out of reach for many people.

Science centers and natural history museums have extended their reach in various ways. Mobile learning labs such as the Pacific Science Center's Science on Wheels and portable "museum-in-a-box" programs like the Burke Museum's Burke Boxes—both in Seattle—bring exhibits, activities and demonstrations to their "visitors." Then there are science cafés, themed after-hour events and "portes-ouvertes" days. Despite these opportunities, the problem of access remains: for special events and free days, you still need to be able to





Above and right: The Uni Project uses cube-like shelves loaded with books curated by local museums and libraries.

get yourself to the museum (and be prepared to “enjoy” it cheek-by-jowl with other visitors). Mobile learning labs or museum boxes usually only serve school districts.

All these programs are wonderful, and I’m certainly not suggesting that they aren’t good enough. Nevertheless there are whole populations that are left out of these models—from kids attending rural schools that can’t or don’t bring a science mobile to them, to adults who’d like to attend a special event but can’t because of their work schedule, to whole families that can’t attend free “first Thursdays” because transportation is an issue. That left me wondering what other possibilities are out there.

There is no single outreach effort that reaches everyone, not even the Internet. According to 2011 Census Bureau data, 71.7 percent of U.S. households have Internet access, leaving almost 3 out of 10 Americans without. Even so, why don’t more institutions follow the model of the Google Art Project? This initiative brings the world closer to acclaimed art and art institutions by using Google technologies that allow anyone with a decent Internet connection to explore art in museums at incredibly high resolution. You can “walk” through art museums like the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, zoom into paintings for magnified views and create your own galleries. Where is the Google Science Project—or, even better, the Smithsonian Science Project?

There are innumerable virtual museum websites of



varying quality, created both by venerable institutions like the Smithsonian and by individuals passionate about a particular topic. Although some seem to be well researched, I’m not sure I would trust the reliability of information from online museums like the Cyber Museum of Toasters. Big-name museums have an advantage in this area, and a number of major science museums have virtual panoramic tours. Unfortunately, the quality of these virtual tours falls far short of the Google Art Project. While one well-known natural history museum’s panoramic tour is visually very appealing, the text is difficult and sometimes impossible to read, making the experience more useful as a “teaser trailer” than as an actual virtual museum.

A number of science museums have “online exhibits,” but these are often more like traditional, informative webpages than virtual museums. Other museums have tried hybrid approaches, such as the Natural History Museum in London’s Nature Plus ([nhm.ac.uk/natureplus](http://nhm.ac.uk/natureplus)), which allows visitors to “collect” museum objects in a virtual account that can then be accessed from home via the Internet.

In contrast, the Google Art Project not only boasts a slick and visually appealing interface, but allows you to search and





browse art from around the world by museum, artist, subject and time period. It also lets users “curate” their own collections of art, which other users can then browse. While interactive science exhibits may be more difficult to digitize and display than a painting, nature is full of wonderfully explorable, observable static objects, from rocks and minerals to feathers and fossils.

Another venture

into mass accessibility is Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). MOOCs are free-choice online educational programs open to anyone who signs up. The idea is that an educator designs a course that can be delivered via the Web, complete with homework. Unlike videos on a YouTube or Vimeo channel, MOOCs aim for interactive participation and open access. While MOOCs do face scrutiny for being over-hyped, some museums have taken the plunge. The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the Museum of Modern Art and the Exploratorium all recently announced their participation in the MOOC hub site Coursera, which will provide free professional development courses aimed at educators. The AMNH’s first three courses will cover genetics, evolution and earth science, while the Exploratorium will focus on inquiry-based learning such as integrating technology and engineering into classroom

Nature is full of wonderfully explorable, observable static objects, from rocks and minerals to feathers and fossils.

activities. The Exploratorium sees MOOCs as a natural outgrowth of their efforts to train science teachers. In a press release, Associate Executive Director Rob Semper said, “We are constantly tinkering with new ways to expand our impact and reach those who stand to benefit the most.”

On the other hand, London’s Tate—well known for their digital education initiatives—initially decided against MOOCs as a viable venue for their education efforts. Rosie Cardiff, senior digital producer at the Tate, notes that the ideal of MOOCs providing free, open learning on a global scale fit the museum’s vision, but the reality is that producing and sustaining MOOCs requires staff time and money. In a world of limited resources, Cardiff says, the Tate worried about the quality of the MOOC learning experience and low course completion rates (which may be as little as 10 percent), as well as their ability to keep content fresh and provide appropriate tutoring for courses. The Tate, however, is involved in creating a MOOC on Andy Warhol in partnership with the University of Edinburgh through the “Artist Rooms” program and will evaluate the success of this approach.

There are other ways to bring science education to people, rather than the other way around. Pop-Up Museums have gained popularity with cultural organizations. This concept, as created and described by Michelle DelCarlo of the Smithsonian Institution’s Spark!Lab, “is a participatory community event where people share personal objects and stories with one another.” Each Pop-Up Museum has a theme, such as “home” or “adoption”; the goal is to spark conversations among people. Conversation is something that could

benefit modern science—from legislating carbon taxes to personal choices about genetically modified organisms (GMOs). “In a typical museum experience,” notes DelCarlo, “visitors can access stories, objects and information





Uni Project visitors learn about the illusion of motion by studying a zoetrope.

only in the context that the museum sets forth. In a Pop-Up Museum, the context of each theme brings forth every person's perspective, which gives them more authority and access to the context of an idea."

In contrast to Pop-Up Museums, which focus on conversations and depend on visitors to provide content, mobile museums bring curated content to geographically diverse audiences. The Think Tank, developed by the University of Chicago's Tyler Alterman and Daniel Casasanto, and the New York-based Uni Project are taking STEM to the public sphere. The Think Tank describes itself as "a mobile cognitive science lab and education station" whose main goal is to engage people who don't normally go to science museums and to get STEM-underrepresented kids hooked on science. Once finished, the Think Tank will be a truck filled with fun, addictive science including brainwave-reading headsets and games and lab space where visitors can design and run their own experiments. The Think Tank will roam the streets of Chicago, parking alongside sidewalks, parks, schools and museums. There are also plans for "sidewalk talks" delivered by psychologists and neuroscientists.

In New York, Leslie Davol and Sam Davol's Uni Project seeks to temporarily transform urban spaces into public venues for learning: "We start with the conviction that books and learning should be prominent, accessible, and part of what we expect at street-level in our cities," states their website. The project is made up of groups of cube-like shelves that can be unloaded from a truck and stacked in almost any urban space. The shelves are loaded with books that have been curated by area museums and libraries. Anyone passing by can borrow a book to read on a bench (also a portable part of the Uni structure). The project has spread to several cities, including a STEM-themed Uni in Seattle created by the Foundation for Early Learning. This Uni features hands-on STEM activities as well as books, with the goal of encouraging STEM education and kindergarten readiness. It's been a huge success at public libraries and public events around Washington State, from Seattle to Spokane.

All of these ideas come with their own limitations. You can't touch anything in a virtual museum, and you had better have high-speed Internet. MOOCs might not be worth the effort to create them if only a few people actually participate and complete courses. Portable projects like the Think Tank and Uni can be resource intensive and can only exist in one physical location at a time. But these initiatives offer something just a little bit different to a portion of the population that doesn't often intersect with the local science museum. They are small, one-off efforts that can be nimble and take big risks. Museums need not abandon their physical buildings to become mobile entities, but they could benefit from seeking out, partnering with and fostering these sorts of projects. With enough efforts accessing different parts of the population, maybe we could finally reach everyone who is interested in science—whether they knew they liked science or not! <<

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*Winifred Kehl is a science writer and exhibit development consultant based in Seattle, Washington.*





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# WHY FIELD TRIPS MATTER

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A NEW STUDY SHOWS  
VISITING AN ART MUSEUM  
IMPROVES CRITICAL  
THINKING SKILLS AND MORE

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An excerpt from  
*The Educational Value of Field  
Trips*, originally published in  
*Education Next*, Winter 2014.

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By Jay P. Greene, Brian Kisida  
and Daniel H. Bowen

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Left: Bo Bartlett, *The Box* (2002). To assess whether field trips improve critical thinking skills, researchers asked students to write essays about this painting.





**T**he school field trip has a long history in American public education. For decades, students have piled into yellow buses to visit a variety of cultural institutions, including art, natural history and science museums, as well as theaters, zoos and historical sites. Schools gladly endured the expense and disruption of providing field trips because they saw these experiences as central to their educational mission: schools exist not only to provide economically useful skills

in numeracy and literacy, but also to produce civilized young men and women who would appreciate the arts and culture. More-advantaged families may take their children to these cultural institutions outside of school hours, but less-advantaged students are less likely to have these experiences if schools do not provide them. With field trips, public schools viewed themselves as the great equalizer in terms of access to our cultural heritage.

Today, culturally enriching field trips are in decline. Museums across the country report a steep drop in

school tours. For example, the Field Museum in Chicago at one time welcomed more than 300,000 students every year. Recently the number is below 200,000. Between 2002 and 2007, Cincinnati arts organizations saw a 30 percent decrease in student attendance. A survey by the American Association of School Administrators found that more than half of schools eliminated planned field trips in 2010-11.

The decision to reduce culturally enriching field trips reflects a variety of factors. Financial pressures force schools to make difficult decisions





Discussion of paintings is largely student-directed during field trips to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

contribute to the development of students into civilized young men and women who possess more knowledge about art, have stronger critical-thinking skills, exhibit increased historical empathy, display higher levels of tolerance,

and have a greater taste for consuming art and culture.

### Design of the Study and School Tours

The 2011 opening of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Northwest Arkansas created the opportunity for this study. Crystal Bridges is the first major art museum to be built in the United States in the last four decades, with more than 50,000 square feet of gallery space and an endowment in excess of \$800 million. Portions of the museum's endowment are devoted to covering all of the

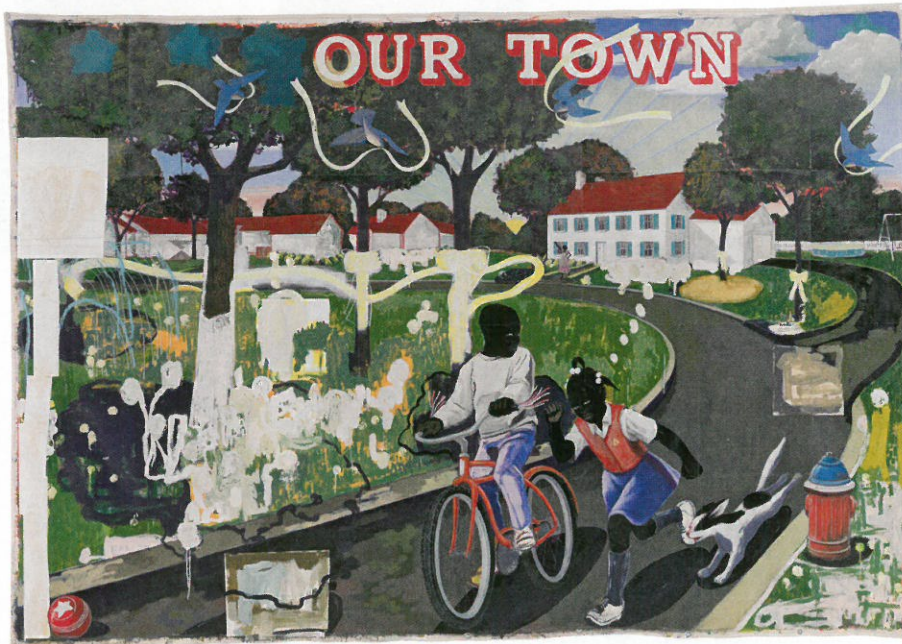
about how to allocate scarce resources, and field trips are increasingly seen as an unnecessary frill. Greater focus on raising student performance on math and reading standardized tests may also lead schools to cut field trips. Some schools believe that student time would be better spent in the classroom preparing for the exams. When schools do organize field trips, they are increasingly choosing to take students on trips to reward them for working hard to improve their test scores rather than to provide cultural enrichment. Schools take students to

amusement parks, sporting events and movie theaters instead of to museums and historical sites.

If schools are de-emphasizing culturally enriching field trips, has anything been lost as a result? Surprisingly, we have relatively little rigorous evidence about how field trips affect students. The research presented here is the first large-scale randomized-control trial designed to measure what students learn from school tours of an art museum.

We find that students learn quite a lot. In particular, enriching field trips





Kerry James Marshall, *Our Town* (1995).

expenses associated with school tours. Crystal Bridges reimburses schools for the cost of buses, provides free admission and lunch, and even pays for the cost of substitute teachers to cover for teachers who accompany students on the tour.

Because the tour is completely free to schools, and because Crystal Bridges was built in an area that never previously had an art museum, there was high demand for school tours. Not all school groups could be accommodated right away. So our research team worked with the staff at Crystal Bridges to assign spots for school tours by lottery. During the first two semesters of the school tour program, the museum received 525 applications from school groups representing 38,347 students in kindergarten through grade 12. We created

matched pairs among the applicant groups based on similarity in grade level and other demographic factors. An ideal and common matched pair would be adjacent grades in the same school. We then randomly ordered the matched pairs to determine scheduling prioritization. Within each pair, we randomly assigned which applicant would be in the treatment group and receive a tour that semester and which would be in the control group and have its tour deferred.

We administered surveys to 10,912 students and 489 teachers at 123 different schools three weeks, on average, after the treatment group received its tour. The student surveys included multiple items assessing knowledge about art as well as measures of historical empathy, tolerance and sustained

interest in visiting art museums.

We also assessed students' critical-thinking skills by asking them to write a short essay in response to a painting that they had not previously seen. Finally, we collected a behavioral measure of interest in art consumption by providing all students with a coded coupon good for free family admission to a special exhibit at the museum to see whether the field trip increased the likelihood of students making future visits.

The intervention we studied is a modest one. Students received a one-hour tour of the museum in which they typically viewed and discussed five paintings. Some students were free to roam the museum following their formal tour, but the entire experience usually involved less than half a day. The discussion of each painting during the tour was largely student-directed, with the museum educators facilitating the discourse and providing commentary beyond the names of the work and the artist and a brief description only when students requested it.

## Results

**Recalling Tour Details.** Our research suggests that students retain a great deal of factual information from their tours. Students who received a tour of the museum were able to recall details about the paintings they had seen at very high rates. For example, 88 percent of the students who saw the Eastman Johnson painting *At the Camp—Spinning Yarns and Whittling*



## Students retain a great deal of information from their tours.

knew when surveyed weeks later that the painting depicts abolitionists making maple syrup to undermine the sugar industry, which relied on slave labor. Similarly, 82 percent of those who saw Norman Rockwell's *Rosie the Riveter* could recall that the painting emphasizes the importance of women entering the workforce during World War II. Among students who saw Thomas Hart Benton's *Ploughing It*

*Under*, 79 percent recollected that it is a depiction of a farmer destroying his crops as part of a Depression-era price support program. And 70 percent of the students who saw Romare Bearden's *Sacrifice* could remember that it is part of the Harlem Renaissance art movement. Since there was no guarantee that these facts would be raised in student-directed discussions, and because students had

no particular reason for remembering these details (there was no test or grade associated with the tours), it is impressive that they could recall historical and sociological information at such high rates.

These results suggest that art could be an important tool for effectively conveying traditional academic content, but this analysis cannot prove it. The control-group performance was hardly better than chance in identifying factual information about these paintings, but they never had the opportunity to learn the material. The high rate of recall of



Students on a field trip to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art study Kerry James Marshall's painting (left).



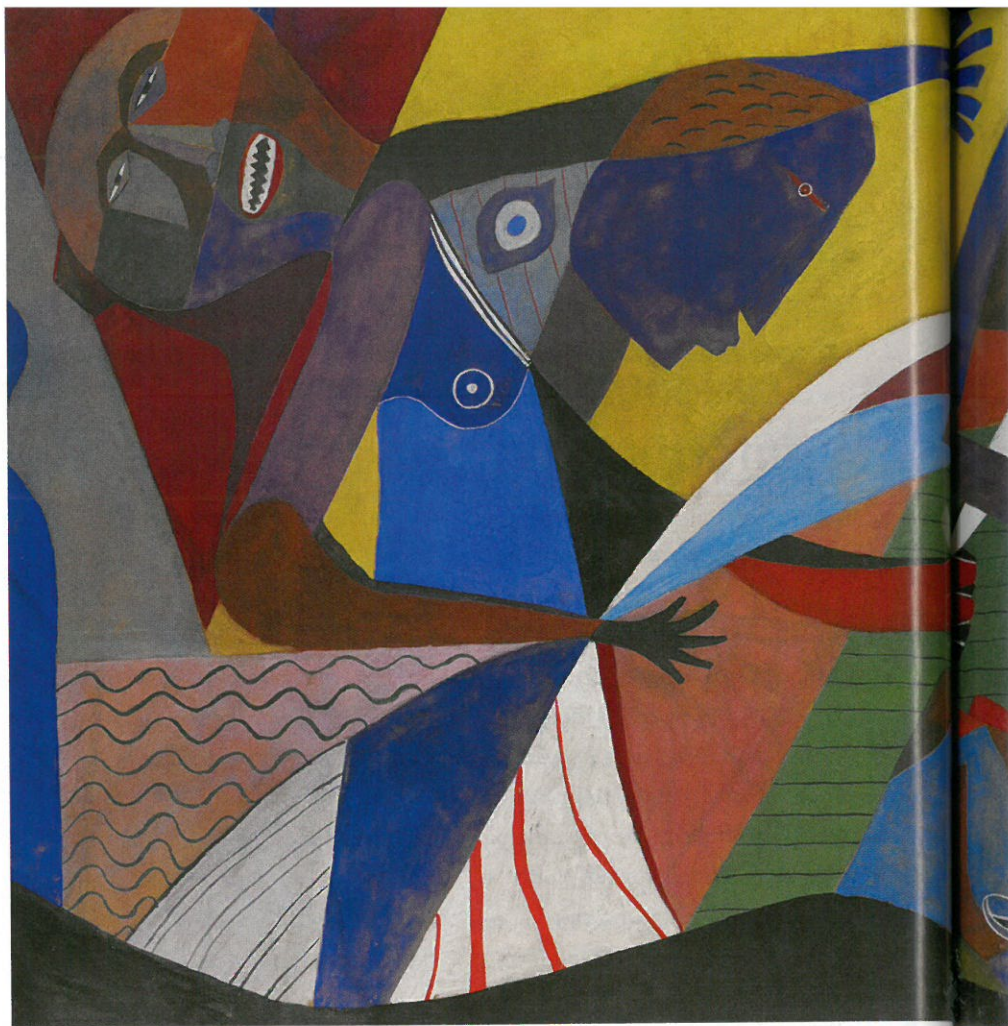
Several weeks after visiting the museum, most students could easily recall details about Romare Bearden's *Sacrifice* (right) and Eastman Johnson's *At the Camp—Spinning Yarns and Whittling* (opposite).

factual information by students who toured the museum demonstrates that the tours made an impression. The students could remember important details about what they saw and discussed.

**Critical Thinking.** Beyond recalling the details of their tour, did a visit to an art museum have a significant effect on students? Our study demonstrates that it did. For example, students randomly assigned to receive a school tour of Crystal Bridges later displayed demonstrably stronger ability to think critically about art than the control group.

During the first semester of the study, we showed all 3rd- through 12th-grade students a painting they had not previously seen, Bo Bartlett's *The Box*. We then asked students to write short essays in response to two questions: What do you think is going on in this painting? And, what do you see that makes you think that? These are standard prompts used by museum educators to spark discussion during school tours. We stripped the essays of all identifying information and had two coders rate the compositions using a seven-item rubric for measuring critical thinking that was developed by researchers at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

We express the impact of a school tour of Crystal Bridges on critical-thinking skills in terms of standard-deviation effect sizes. Overall, we find



that students assigned by lottery to a tour of the museum improve their ability to think critically about art by 9 percent of a standard deviation relative to the control group. The benefit for disadvantaged groups is considerably larger.

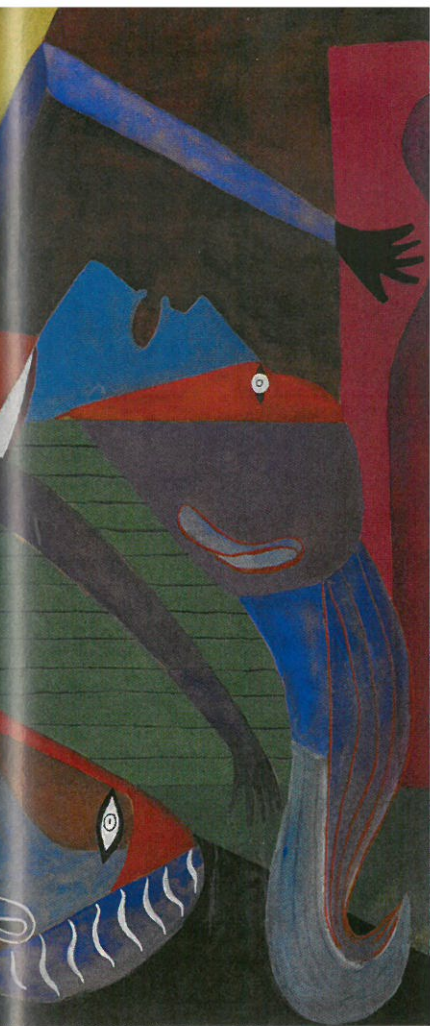
A large amount of the gain in critical-thinking skills stems from an increase in the number of observations that students made in their essays. Students who went on a tour became more observant, noticing and describing more details in an image. Being observant and paying attention to detail is an important and highly useful skill that students learn when they study and discuss works of art.

**Historical Empathy.** Tours of art museums also affect students' values. Visiting an art museum exposes

students to a diversity of ideas, peoples, places and time periods. That broadening experience imparts greater appreciation and understanding. We see the effects in significantly higher historical empathy and tolerance measures among students randomly assigned to a school tour of Crystal Bridges.

Historical empathy is the ability to understand and appreciate what life was like for people who lived in a different time and place. This is a central purpose of teaching history, as it provides students with a clearer perspective about their own time and place. To measure historical empathy, we included three statements on the survey with which students could express their level of agreement or disagreement: 1) I have a good understanding of how early Americans





thought and felt; 2) I can imagine what life was like for people 100 years ago; and 3) When looking at a painting that shows people, I try to imagine what those people are thinking. We combined these items into a scale measuring historical empathy.

Students who went on a tour of Crystal Bridges experience a 6 percent of a standard deviation increase in historical empathy. Among rural students, the benefit is much larger, a 15 percent of a standard deviation gain. The fact that Crystal Bridges features art from different periods in American history may have helped produce these gains in historical empathy.

**Tolerance.** To measure tolerance, we included four statements on the survey with which students could express their level of agreement or



disagreement: 1) People who disagree with my point of view bother me; 2) Artists whose work is critical of America should not be allowed to have their work shown in art museums; 3) I appreciate hearing views different from my own; and 4) I think people can have different opinions about the same thing. We combined these items into a scale measuring the general effect of the tour on tolerance.

Overall, receiving a school tour of an art museum increases student tolerance by 7 percent of a standard deviation. As with critical thinking, the benefits are much larger for students in disadvantaged groups. Rural students who visited Crystal Bridges experience a 13 percent of a standard deviation improvement in tolerance. For students at high-poverty schools, the benefit is 9 percent of a standard deviation.

**Interest in Art Museums.** Perhaps the most important outcome of a school tour is whether it cultivates an interest among students in returning to cultural institutions in the future.

If visiting a museum helps improve critical thinking, historical empathy, tolerance and other outcomes not measured in this study, then those benefits would compound for students if they were more likely to frequent similar cultural institutions throughout their life. The direct effects of a single visit are necessarily modest and may not persist, but if school tours help students become regular museum visitors, they may enjoy a lifetime of enhanced critical thinking, tolerance and historical empathy.

We measured how school tours of Crystal Bridges develop in students an interest in visiting art museums in two ways: with survey items and a behavioral measure. Interest in visiting art museums among students who toured the museum is 8 percent of a standard deviation higher than that in the randomized control group. Among rural students, the increase is much larger: 22 percent of a standard deviation. Students at high-poverty schools score 11 percent of a standard deviation higher on the cultural consumer scale



## The benefits of a school tour are generally much larger for students from less-advantaged backgrounds.

if they were randomly assigned to tour the museum. And minority students gain 10 percent of a standard deviation in their desire to be art consumers.

We also measured whether students are more likely to visit Crystal Bridges in the future if they received a school tour. All students who participated in the study during the first semester, including those who did not receive a tour, were provided with a coupon that gave them and their families free entry to a special exhibit at Crystal Bridges. The coupons were coded so that we could determine the applicant group to which students belonged. Students had as long as six months after receipt of the coupon to use it.

We collected all redeemed coupons and were able to calculate how many adults and youths were admitted. Though students in the treatment group received 49 percent of all coupons that were distributed, 58 percent of the people admitted to the special exhibit with those coupons came from the treatment group. In other words, the families of students who received a tour were 18 percent more likely to return to the museum than we would expect if their rate of coupon use was the same as their share of distributed coupons.

This is particularly impressive given that the treatment-group students had recently visited the museum. Their desire to visit a museum might have been satiated, while the control group might have been curious to visit Crystal Bridges for the first time. Despite having recently been to the museum, students who received a school tour came back at higher rates. Receiving a school tour cultivates a taste for visiting art museums, and perhaps for sharing the experience with others.

### Disadvantaged Students

One consistent pattern in our results is that the benefits of a school tour are generally much larger for students from less-advantaged backgrounds. Students from rural areas and high-poverty schools, as well as minority students, typically show gains that are two to three times larger than those of the total sample. Disadvantaged students assigned by lottery to receive a school tour of an art museum make exceptionally large gains in critical thinking, historical empathy, tolerance and becoming art consumers.

It appears that the less prior exposure to culturally enriching experiences students have, the larger the benefit of receiving a school tour of a museum. We have some direct

measures to support this explanation. To isolate the effect of the first time visiting the museum, we truncated our sample to include only control-group students who had never visited Crystal Bridges and treatment-group students who had visited for the first time during their tour. The effect for this first visit is roughly twice as large as that for the overall sample, just as it is for disadvantaged students.

When we examine effects for subgroups of advantaged students, we typically find much smaller or null effects. Students from large towns and low-poverty schools experience few significant gains from their school tour of an art museum. If schools do not provide culturally enriching experiences for these students, their families are likely to have the inclination and ability to provide those experiences on their own. But the families of disadvantaged students are less likely to substitute their own efforts when schools do not offer culturally enriching experiences. Disadvantaged students need their schools to take them on enriching field trips if they are likely to have these experiences at all.

### Policy Implications

School field trips to cultural institutions have notable benefits.



Students randomly assigned to receive a school tour of an art museum experience improvements in their knowledge of and ability to think critically about art, display stronger historical empathy, develop higher tolerance, and are more likely to visit such cultural institutions as art museums in the future. If schools cut field trips or switch to “reward” trips that visit less-enriching destinations, then these important educational opportunities are lost. It is particularly important that schools serving disadvantaged students provide culturally enriching field trip experiences.

This first-ever, large-scale, random-assignment experiment of the effects of school tours of an art museum should help inform the thinking of school administrators, educators, policy makers and philanthropists. Policy makers should consider these results when deciding whether schools have sufficient resources and appropriate policy guidance to take their students on tours of cultural institutions. School administrators should give thought to these results when deciding whether to use their resources and time for these tours. And philanthropists should weigh these results when deciding whether to build and maintain these cultural institutions with quality educational programs. We don't just want our children to acquire work skills from their education; we also want them to develop into civilized people



Students tour the galleries at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

who appreciate the breadth of human accomplishments. The school field trip is an important tool for meeting this goal. <<

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*Jay P. Greene is professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, where Brian Kisida is a senior research associate. Daniel H. Bowen is a*

*postdoctoral fellow at Rice University's Kinder Institute, Houston, Texas. Anne Kraybill, school and community programs manager at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, oversaw the development and implementation of the school tours. To read the full report, go to <http://educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/>.*





# MUSEUMS in Good Health

An adapted excerpt from  
*Museums On Call: How Museums Are Addressing Health Issues*,  
a report from the American Alliance of Museums.

For years, museums have demonstrated their public value as educational providers, community anchors and stewards of our national heritage. They've also earned a reputation for driving tourism, creating jobs, attracting businesses to the community, and serving as a source of immense civic and community pride.

As society has changed, so has the work of museums. Museums are facilitating job training programs, celebrating cultural diversity and awareness, teaching English as a Second Language classes and serving as locations for supervised visits through the family court system.

But health care?

In fact, museums are playing a significant role in many health care issues.

Adapted and excerpted here for publication in *Museum*—with special contributions highlighting trendsetting programs—the Alliance report *Museums On Call: How Museums Are Addressing Health Issues* showcases some of the important ways that museums are contributing to health care. (For

the complete report, please go to [aam-us.org/advocacy](http://aam-us.org/advocacy).)

All around the country, museums are helping patients, training medical professionals, and educating the public about health and wellness issues. Following is an introduction to 10 aspects of the health care field in which museums are making significant contributions.

## ALZHEIMER'S

Approximately 5 million Americans have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and 1 in 8 people ages 60 and older report memory loss or confusion. Museums are stepping up to serve this growing demographic.

Many museums have developed partnerships with their local Alzheimer's Association chapter, offering special tours for adults with memory loss, facilitating hands-on art-making with art therapists and providing museum staff with specialized training on how to trigger memories using works of art as prompts. In some cases, artists and museum educators travel to memory care residences to draw, paint, sculpt



and print with patients. For example, staff from the Hyde Collection in New York was trained by the local Alzheimer's Association chapter for its "Memories in the Making" program, in which participants use conversation prompts such as art work to create imagery and induce memories. The program is conducted onsite and as outreach to nursing homes and residences.

Botanic gardens have worked with individuals with dementia and their care providers to provide olfactory and tactile experiences. Participants create objects, such as a fragrant sachet, that serve as a cue for future conversation and interaction. Following these programs, participants report a lasting sense of satisfaction, calm and an increased willingness to converse.

## AUTISM

One in 88 American children is estimated to be on the autism spectrum, and an estimated 5 percent of children 7 and under have a disability or special need. These children may have special challenges with social interaction, sensory processing, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behavior.

Many museums are leading the charge in creating programs for families facing these challenges. Some children's museums open early to offer a quieter, less crowded experience for these children and their families, or offer a summer art camp for children with special needs. Others carefully monitor the building temperature or adjust the lighting in some areas to create a more sensory-friendly environment.

Many museums also utilize multiple learning styles, creating visual representations of what visitors can expect to

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"Homegrown: Phipps Edible Garden Program" equipped 10 Pittsburgh households with vegetable gardens. See page 50.





see and do, in order to help parents prepare their child and minimize unfamiliar and unexpected experiences. These museums also train their staff to understand what to expect, how to react and what community resources are available to help these visitors.

Some children create collaborative art projects focusing on building self-expression and communication with peers and teachers. In one program, educators saw marked improvement in individual students' creative expression, an increased comfort level in handling transitions and an awakened openness to new tactile materials. Museum educators have worked with teachers, parents, paraprofessionals and site coaches on ways to utilize art-making as a regular communication tool for students.

## DISEASE PREVENTION

Museums are also making a difference in a wide variety of disease prevention efforts.

In some cases, institutions collaborate with medical professionals and researchers. For example, the Invertebrate Zoology Department at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History works with medical providers to identify bedbugs and other insects. The Field Museum in Chicago analyzes pathogens and parasites in birds and small mammals to help the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention understand and address emerging health threats.

Other institutions work directly with community members to meet their needs. Science Factory Children's Museum in Eugene, Oregon, hosts a whooping cough booster shot clinic for adults in partnership with Lane County Public Health. The Arizona Science Center in Phoenix has a National Institutes of Health/Science Education Partnership Award-funded project in which middle school students replicate a computer sorting massive amounts of data and identifying disease patterns to determine appropriate cancer treatment. The museum also offers visitors the chance to be "Disease Detectives" and has several stage presentations encouraging audience involvement in fighting microbes and viruses.



Giraffes are some of the animals that hospital patients can watch on "ZooTV."

## HEALTH LITERACY

As well-known providers of lifelong learning, museums educate communities about health care issues. At EdVenture Children's Museum in Columbia, South Carolina, an anatomy and physiology exhibit takes the form of a 40-foot boy named EDDIE. The museum uses this exhibit and other programs to educate multigenerational family audiences about health and chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.

Museums also play an important role surveying the public about their perceptions, concerns and wishes surrounding health care issues. For example, the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, has gathered such data, providing results in an interactive exhibit.

## HOSPITAL OUTREACH

Art, music, poetry and theater have all been proven to deliver profound healing benefits, and museums are making a significant contribution in this area. Hospital patients around the country are benefiting from therapeutic programs such as art





therapy, bedside art-making and art videos.

For example, a museum educator might bring a work of art from the museum's collection and lead a discussion with patients. Works of art are carefully selected for imagery that is calming, meditative and uplifting, and are designed to serve those with varying degrees of fear, distress and physical pain. Art therapists with specialized mental health training work in collaboration with museum educators and patients including those with brain and spinal cord injuries, orthopedic injuries and amputations to promote coordination, dexterity and speech. **(See below for a case study.)**

### MEDICAL TRAINING

The ability to observe carefully, describe accurately and then interpret what one sees is essential in clinical diagnosis. Because these skills are also requisite in the visual arts, museums began partnering with medical schools to help train the next generation of medical professionals.

Museums play an important role in teaching medical

## ZooTV

### Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History

Sioux Falls, SD

The Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, launched the nationally recognized "ZooTV" as part of an innovative partnership with Sanford Health in 2009. Using 15 cameras throughout its 45-acre campus, the zoo broadcasts real-time, live animal images to the hospital system's patient rooms and clinic waiting areas. This relationship allows the zoo to conduct its mission of connecting kids with animals in an even bigger way, showing monkeys scurrying through their exhibit and close-up shots of giraffes eating.

This innovative program has received widespread media coverage from *NBC Nightly News* to *USA Today*, focusing on the healing power of nature and the creativity of the partnership, which also brings zoo educators to teach critically ill kids several times a week in the Sanford Children's Hospital. In addition to getting kids to the zoo, the zoo is constantly thinking of how it can bring the zoo to kids. "ZooTV" not only provides a live feed featuring animals like penguins and tigers, but allows patients to get a sneak peek at behind-the-scenes zookeeper work. Participants take away a sense of why these animals are important and how they fit into our world.

Patients and their families aren't the only ones benefiting from these cameras. Zookeepers are able to remotely monitor animals giving birth or the introduction of new animals. Significant zoo births—including a baby rhino, Amur tigers and reticulated giraffe—were monitored through the cameras. —*Jess Poncelet, Marketing Coordinator*



Viewing the Milwaukee Public Museum's mummy Djed Hor (right) prompts students to consider feelings towards burial practices. A tattooed, mummified arm (bottom) helps students think about tattooing today and in the past.

## Physician's Assistant Program

### Milwaukee Public Museum

Can a tattoo help a physician understand a patient's medical condition? What are the potential health effects of religious dietary restrictions, such as veganism? These are just a few of the questions pondered by students as they experience the Milwaukee Public Museum's Physician's Assistant program, a new partnership through which students at Carroll University learn in a museum setting how to relate to patients of other cultures or religions.

MPM is a working research institution that is continually striving to forge new partnerships with other educational facilities. MPM's PA program came to be when the museum's academic dean, Ellen Censky, approached Carroll University to discuss ways in which the museum could integrate with the school's educational objectives, and the university indicated a need to help students broaden their perspective regarding the influence of culture on health.

Through the lens of medical anthropology, Dawn Scher Thomae, MPM's anthropology collections manager, developed a program through which students are able to learn how culture and health care are intertwined and how culture plays a major role in shaping one's health and health beliefs. Given onsite at MPM, the program begins with a short presentation, followed by a walk through select exhibit galleries chosen to spark discussion on topics such as the "tattoo question."

From an engagement perspective, teaching within MPM's exhibit galleries is an important component in the program's success. "Students are fascinated and engaged due to the fact that we're walking around and using case studies," says Scher Thomae. "So many people are visual learners, and showing them is a lot different than just telling them."

When students see a specimen featuring tattooing in an exhibit case, for example, they are able to make a relatable connection between the past and the present, and to themselves, in a way they might not through a lecture or text. Once these connections are made, students can apply these same ideas to their patients and better understand how cultural background can influence patient health.

—Carrie Trousil Becker, Communications Director







students, nursing students and other medical professionals to develop observational skills that can aid in proper diagnoses of patients. Professional auditors for the Society of Quality Assurance (SQA), which oversees the pharmaceutical industry, have eagerly enlisted museum educators to help SQA staff develop skills such as careful observation, asking open-ended questions and audience assessment.

One medical student described her initial skepticism that her observational skills could improve by looking at the paintings. But after painstakingly considering details in photographs of patients, she was a believer. “I paid more attention to colors, shapes and sizes of skin blotches, lesions and other conditions,” she said. **(See page opposite for a case study.)**

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health and mental illness have long been difficult topics of discussion. Museums offer exhibits and other programs that help to break down these barriers. Museums are also partnering with mental health agencies to host clients as volunteers, exhibiting their art and holding public programs on art and mental wellness. **(See page 48 for a case study.)**

## MILITARY AND VETERANS HEALTH

Museums are extremely proud of their collaborations with military personnel and veterans. Museums partner with Veterans Administration hospitals and make outreach visits to soldiers with combat-related injuries, including traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. A program might involve a specially trained museum educator providing a very brief talk about a work from the museum’s permanent collection, guiding the participants in a hands-on activity related to the work and encouraging exploration. **(See page 49 for a case study.)**

## NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

Museums have also taken a leading role in educating the public about health, nutrition and the benefits of physical activity. Some museums participate in multicultural health fairs, plant community vegetable gardens, offer walking tours and promote healthy eating. Many also have exhibits related to human physiology, while others discuss the history of food, changing trends in the food industry and how to make informed choices by reading nutrition labels. **(See page 50 for a case study.)**

## VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

The Art Beyond Sight Collaborative recognizes that art can address many of the daily living issues faced by people who are blind. Museums have embraced this concept by designing tactile exhibits and specialized touch tours with multisensory verbal descriptions for the blind and persons with low vision. The Walters Art Museum, for instance, has a long-term partnership with the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, providing touch tours of sculptures combined with verbal description tours. In addition, many botanic gardens have developed specialty tours for groups with low vision and other special needs, including hands-on activities, specially designed multisensory tours and even specialized self-guided experiences.

Art Beyond Sight has also been working to involve the next generation of museum professionals through its Disability and Inclusion Curricula. Museum studies programs at a number of universities are collaborating to develop methodologies and content related to inclusion and accessibility for future staff and decision makers at cultural institutions.



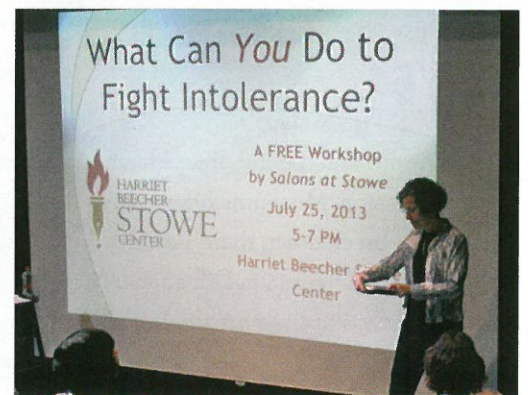
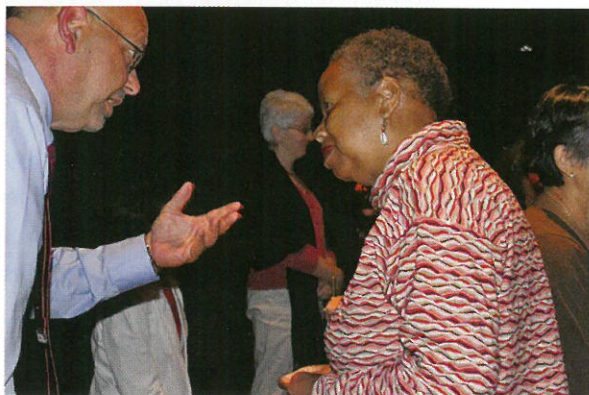
## Mental Health: Stigmas, Stereotypes and Solutions

**Harriet Beecher Stowe Center**  
Hartford, CT

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center offers programs for a wide range of audiences, creating a link between the center's rich historic context and contemporary issues, and inspiring action for positive change. In the award-winning Salons at Stowe series, frequent author events and book discussions, and interactive house tours, the center creates a "safe place" for constructive dialogue on what can be uncomfortable topics. Frequent programs on bullying, stereotyping, racism and cultural diversity led to the initiation of programming on issues of mental health in American society. In 2013, the center presented a Salon at Stowe entitled "Mental Health: Stigmas, Stereotypes and Solutions," featuring representatives of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and Hartford's Institute of Living to consider the prevalence of mental illness, and the availability and accessibility of treatment and support for families struggling with mental health challenges. As with all Salons, the point of the discussion was to identify solutions and provide actionable ideas for the audience. Ideas generated included: mental health awareness curriculum in schools; understanding the collective cost of stigmatization; teaching empathy; and legislative advocacy for mental health services. Programming on this topic and related issues has deepened the center's relationships with community organizations and individuals concerned with these issues, and attracts an audience that reflects our community's diversity. —  
*Mary Ellen White, Director of Marketing*



Salons at Stowe encourage discussion of typically uncomfortable topics, including the treatment of people with mental illness.







## Veterans Wellness Recovery Program

**Ormond Memorial Art Museum and Gardens**  
*Ormond Beach, FL*

How does a museum founded in the 1940s as a tribute to veterans remain relevant to that population today?

Looking for a way to continue our commitment to veterans, the museum began an art outreach program for local veterans in 2010. We have provided more than 500 hours of art outreach to veterans in the greater Daytona Beach area working with the V.A.s' Wellness Recovery Program—a transitional, educational initiative designed to assist veterans in reclaiming their lives.

Each month, we provide instruction and supplies for an hour-and-a-half art experiential at the Wellness Center facility. The projects are designed for successful outcomes in a nonjudgmental environment. The creative process is designed to relieve stress, reduce anxiety and restore a sense of balance and harmony.

The program's goals are for participants to improve leisure skills, experience satisfaction and enjoyment, and improve attention spans, memory and social skills.

The benefits to the museum have been media coverage in nontraditional outlets, a financial response from certain donors, increased support from the military/veteran community and an increased presence at our annual Veterans Day Tribute community event. —*Susan Richmond, Museum Director*





The Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens promoted better food choices and overall health through its "Homegrown: Phipps Edible Garden Program."

## Homegrown: Phipps Edible Garden Program

**Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens**  
*Pittsburgh*

Families that eat together are healthier and communities where people know each other are stronger. So in an effort to help combat childhood obesity and benefit underserved populations in Pittsburgh, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens launched "Homegrown: Phipps Edible Garden Program" in 2013. Working to increase access to fresh produce in food deserts, promote better food choices and improve the overall health of families and children while forging bonds among neighbors, the initiative provides mentorship, education and resources, and establishes vegetable gardens at peoples' homes.

Partnering with the local YMCA chapter in its pilot year, "Homegrown" first focused its efforts in the neighborhood of Homewood, equipping 10 households with a total of 24 raised beds and 391 square feet of growing space. As part of these efforts, Phipps also collaborated with Pittsburgh JobCorps to build and install the gardens, while giving students hands-on experience. Each participating family received these services, as well as soil, seeds, plants and gardening tools, free of charge. In addition to creating sites for cultivation, "Homegrown" seeks to hone beneficiaries' skills and knowledge so that they can continue growing on their own. Covering everything from weed management to the culinary possibilities of Swiss chard, monthly organic edible gardening workshops and cooking classes empower gardeners to realize their potential. Eventually these new city gardeners will become teachers for others as they take their health into their own hands. —*Charity Grimes Bauman, Community Outreach Coordinator, and Richard V. Piacentini, Executive Director*





Museums play an important role in addressing numerous health issues, and the public is warmly embracing—and greatly benefiting from—these initiatives. Continuing to build on their long-standing commitment to public service, many museums have found their service in health care helps them deepen relationships in their community. “The more relevant we are to our community, the more likely our work will be funded and the more likely we can expand our work and serve more people,” explains Michelle Lopez, manager of the “ArtAccess” program and Autism Initiatives at the Queens Museum of Art in New York.

Participating in health care also helps the museum reach a more diverse population. “Other community organizations may serve a specific race, religion, gender, age group or income level, but the hospital serves everyone,” Lopez says. These collaborations lead to good publicity for the museum, bringing awareness to an audience that typically does not or cannot visit the museum in person. <<





# POINT





# COUNTERPOINT

**The concept of strategic planning has been integral to American business, government and, increasingly over the years, nonprofits.** This is certainly true for museums. Witness that a strategic plan—with clearly defined goals and timelines for achieving them—is required for an institution to be awarded accreditation by the Alliance’s Accreditation Commission.

Recently, however, a management theory has emerged that strategic planning can actually be inhibiting, preventing an organization from being nimble and flexible enough to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. In the museum field, leaders most often raise this concern when they consider meeting the needs of their community.

Following are opinion pieces representing two sides of the debate. What has been your museum’s experience with strategic planning? Drop us a line at [dblanton@aam-us.org](mailto:dblanton@aam-us.org).

## The Beauty of Brevity

Institutional plans don’t need to be lengthy or complex.

BY CARL R. NOLD

The last decade has been a time of uncertainty for even the best-run nonprofit organizations, including museums. With major financial downturns, new security requirements at home and abroad, increasingly severe storms and natural disasters, and changing support base demographics, only

*Continued on page 54*

## The Power of the Plan

Strategic planning is crucial for one historic house museum.

BY SUSAN ROBERTSON

The media today is rife with stories chronicling the difficulties facing historic house museums and historic sites, given the many challenges (and few resources) confronting them: maintenance of buildings and grounds, collections care and marketing demands. At Gore Place, we have overcome these and other obstacles and are moving toward a

*Continued on page 55*



## The Beauty of Brevity cont'd ...

the most nimble of organizations have been able to adapt and thrive. Numerous respected organizations—from the local museum to an internationally recognized urban opera company—have unexpectedly closed their doors. For organizations striving for sustainability and successful fulfillment of mission, institutional planning is essential. Enlightened management and the accreditation process have long recognized that museums must effectively plan for their futures, or they will not survive the constantly changing landscape of the present.

While the AAM standard for an institutional plan says that “the process of creating and implementing a plan is far more important and beneficial to the museum than the actual plan itself,” in practice the accreditation staff and commission appear to focus on a rigid format for planning that does not support this statement. According to AAM, an institutional plan must have prioritized action steps, establish timelines, assign responsibilities and identify specific resources. Colleagues report that plans that lack any of these formula elements have been rejected as inadequate, regardless of the quality of process followed or of the results achieved. Many institutions applying for accreditation have expressed concern that the rigidity of the current standard is not consistent with current best practices in business or nonprofit management. Some suggest that the AAM model spends too much time defining a document and gives too little attention to the effectiveness of planning.

There is no doubt that institutional planning is a cornerstone of an effectively managed museum and of ensuring fulfillment of its mission. Experience shows, however, that highly detailed plan documents may not be the best approach for all institutions. Especially in institutions of increasing size and complexity, staff turnover is frequent, budgets are

determined on an annual basis, and fundraising is carefully matched to the interests and schedules of potential donors. Locking in the details of what will be done by whom, when and with what specific funding source is a paperwork exercise that is inconsistent with the enormous flexibility needed for institutional operations. Such a document is frequently out of date within days of completion.

What I suggest instead is an evaluation of the quality of planning. An institutional plan must represent a shared vision, reflecting a common sense among the institution’s leadership of the direction and priorities needed to advance the mission. Any plan developed without trustee, staff and constituent involvement is not an institutional plan. There must also be an implementation process that moves from the big vision stated in the plan to an action plan. The plan must become an integral part of operations at all levels of the institution.

At Historic New England, we created a “strategic agenda,” a document of just four pages that establishes a five-year direction for our organization. It states major goals and areas of effort needed in the planning period for each goal. Each year with this foundation, all staff teams propose projects they believe will advance the agenda in the year ahead. The ideas are evaluated by the leadership team and proposed to the trustees in the form of a “focus and priorities” statement for the year. Following trustee adoption of the focus and priorities, the staff develops an “annual plan,” an internal management document that is a single-year detailed implementation roadmap, with personnel assignments and quarterly deadlines. In parallel, the trustees approve an annual budget that supports the anticipated annual work plan, and individual staff performance objectives are drafted. At

*Continued on page 56*



## The Power of the Plan cont'd...

sustainable future. Our adoption of, and devotion to, strategic planning was the catalyst for this success, and our plan remains our North Star while we chart our own course on how to reach our vision.

Before we explain how and why this process works for us, a little background is in order. Gore Place is an early 19th-century historic house museum and farm located nine miles west of Boston in Waltham, Massachusetts. Christopher Gore was a leading federalist, a Massachusetts governor and a U.S. senator. The Gore mansion, built in 1806, is a 21,000-square-foot, Federal-style brick mansion. Gore's wife Rebecca and a French architect, J. G. Legrand, designed the mansion. Gore Place Society was founded in 1935 to save and preserve the high-style residence.

For the first 60 years, the members of Gore Place Society took excellent care of the mansion and assembled a fine furnishing collection (now including more than 6,000 objects) to tell the story of the Gore occupancy. By the late 1980s, however, membership growth was stagnant and the trustees were finding it difficult to keep up with maintenance costs.

In 1994, a new executive director suggested using strategic planning to provide a direction towards the upcoming bicentennial celebration of the mansion. It was clear, however, from the first discussion that the overriding concern was for the future financial stability of Gore Place. For too long, a small endowment had been used to cover emergencies or unavoidable needs. Gore Place needed to plan for the future with a focus on the entire estate, not just the decorative arts collection, and an understanding that we had to assure that the museum had the financial resources to carry out the whole mission.

That first plan had 33 goals with strategies but no tactics, costs, etc. The current plan has only three goals: 1) strengthen and broaden our financial

resources to assure the museum's ability to grow and fulfill its mission; 2) create and promote an enhanced sense of place and history; 3) be a visible and valued museum. Each goal has three to five strategies, and there are multiple tactics. Additional pages outline the strategies, tactics, responsibilities, costs, measures and time line. We find this format provides a very user-friendly guideline to assist the museum in making decisions. We feel free to adjust our strategies and tactics to changing conditions or discoveries. After all, we are interested in the results of our efforts and the plan is only a tool. We review the plan annually, and every three to four years the museum repeats the entire process using outside facilitators and interviews with trustees, staff, members and nonmembers. We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of the excellent facilitators provided at a modest cost by Executive Service Corps, a resource for not-for-profit agencies.

So what kind of progress have we made during the last 20 years? For a small site, we had, and continue to have, very ambitious goals. Initially we knew that as good stewards, we had to stop deferring maintenance on our historic buildings (a 1793 carriage house, an 1806 mansion and an 1835 farm manager's cottage) and put them on a regular maintenance plan. To date, we have completed \$1.8 million in work on the mansion that includes exterior brick and chimney repairs, new gutters, a complete new electrical system, new furnaces and heat circulators, first floor interior storm sashes, and a whole-house fire detection and mist suppression system. All the funds necessary were raised through grants and individual donations. At the same time we have completed lengthy architectural studies inside the building to better understand the Gore story. The studies have revealed fascinating

*Continued on page 57*



## The Beauty of Brevity cont'd ...

the midpoint of the year, “check-in” reviews are held with staff at all levels, and the work plan is adjusted as needed.

How does this differ from the AAM expectation? When we adopted the strategic agenda we could not tell you when specific projects would occur, who would be doing them or where the money would come from. We knew where we wanted to go, but were not yet sure then—or perhaps even now, three years in to a five-year strategy—exactly how and when we are going to get there. Whether our approach of five-year goals plus annual details would satisfy accreditation requirements is as yet unknown; the experiences of colleagues does not encourage us to think it will. Even so, this is planning that works for us and is meeting the needs of our organization. During the planning period, we brought the organization to the highest level of membership in its 103-year history. We steadily increased attendance every year of the plan. We adapted to the 2009 financial crisis without staff layoffs. We completed a program of preservation maintenance that was the largest-ever single such investment in our history. All of these activities support one or more goals of the strategic

agenda, but in the particularly unstable environment of the last few years, each required implementation steps that surely varied from what we anticipated in initial planning.

Three years along, we consult the strategic agenda constantly as the organization thinks, plans and acts. Hardly any meeting goes by without reference to the agenda, and it is the foundation for annual budgets and work plans. It is the yardstick for evaluation. It is planning that has worked, but is not consistent with AAM requirements for detailed planning that require, “for instance...a full 20-page document with an accompanying implementation plan.” Institutions operating in a highly stable environment, with funding sources fully assured, unchanging staff and little need to adjust as they go along might successfully use such a model. I would say that few museums meet those conditions. I join with those who consider the AAM requirements to be too rigid, too document focused and out of sync with current best practices in organizational planning. It is time to reconsider the AAM accreditation institutional planning requirements. «

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*Carl R. Nold is president and CEO, Historic New England, Boston.*

An institutional plan must represent a shared vision, reflecting a common sense among the institution's leadership of the direction and priorities needed to advance the mission.



## The Power of the Plan cont'd...

evidence of the existence of central heating and a hot water shower, previously unknown this early in New England. Each year we complete more projects within the mansion such as reproduction carpets and window treatments. Future projects for the mansion include replacing a missing staircase and adding a public restroom on the first floor.

The next major capital project (\$1.7 million) is to move the 1793 carriage house to a new dry foundation (it was moved in 1965 and placed in a wet area without a foundation); replace the wood shingle roof and gutters; restore the interior to the Gore era to display two recently restored carriages and a sleigh; add heat and fire suppression; and build a small accessory building for bathrooms. The necessary archeology is completed. Planning and fundraising are underway.

At the same time, we cannot forget the interest that had been identified by the first strategic plan in the landscape and farm. The farm is actively producing both animals and crops for sale at our farm stand and for distribution at community food pantries. We now have a summer intern farm-training program as well as many activities for the community to meet their local farmer. The farm cottage has a new roof and is on a regular maintenance schedule. Future plans include a new period barn to accommodate both animals and visitors and a farm precinct for interpretation.

That first plan determined that Gore Place would need many new generous supporters if we were to accomplish our goals. We also needed to become a key part of our community. So we set about growing the membership by presenting activities to encourage membership and visits. We now have more than 1,200 supporters on our rolls and an annual fund goal of \$92,000. The tiny endowment mentioned in the first plan is now a robust financial resource for the museum, providing \$300,000 a year from a 4.25

percent draw. Our volunteer program has grown from a few friends to more than 100 active volunteers who help us in all aspects of our operations. Our annual Sheep Shearing Festival last spring had 17,000 visitors. An event of that size is not possible without many volunteers.

Strategic planning is not the only tool that we use to guide our activities, but it has certainly proven to be a valuable and critical tool for Gore Place over the last 20 years. It organizes our thinking. It allows for voices both inside and outside the museum to be heard. It disciplines us to think about costs and who will lead various initiatives. It demonstrates to all our supporters that we have a business-like method of operation that takes into consideration all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we may face. It attracts supporters to join in the momentum and enthusiasm. It assures prospective trustees, who are successful in their own careers, that they will be joining a professional organization. And, over the years, the good planning and leadership at Gore Place demonstrates that even a small historic site can take on very ambitious plans and be successful.

There are other tools that we use. That very first strategic plan in 1994 called for Gore Place "to undertake self-examination for the purpose of accreditation consideration," a process that continues to be an excellent tool for the museum. We also use outside investment counsel for our portfolio management; we require that all projects, no matter how small, have a budget; we strive to have each program earn at least \$2 for every \$1 spent; and we budget depreciation. But it was strategic planning that started Gore Place moving forward into the 21st century and it will be strategic planning that continues to move us forward and keep us all on the same page. <<

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*Susan Robertson is executive director, Gore Place, Waltham, Massachusetts.*



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**p. 12:** (top) Courtesy Paramount Pictures; Flute: Sarah Mercier/Newseum/Courtesy DreamWorks Studios; (middle) Betty Boop, Dave Fleischer, 1932-39. BFI National Archive; (bottom) image courtesy of the Queens Museum of Art and Grimshaw.

**p. 13:** (top) Briscoe Western Art Museum; (bottom left) Pancho Villa saddle, c. 1920, made by Joaquin Rodriguez and Alberto Tulan Cingo Marquez, leather and silver, on loan from the Ernie and Louise Davis Collection; (bottom right) Z. S. Liang, *Eagle Dancer Potawatomi*, 2010. Briscoe Western Art Museum Collection, gift of the Jack and Valerie Guenther Foundation.

**p. 14:** (top) Natural History Museum, London; (middle) Cummer Museum/Riverside Avenue Renderings, 2012. © Richard Skinner & Associates, Architects; (bottom) Hourglass prop from MCM's Oz.

**p. 15:** (top left) Distribution of dark matter in the universe, simulated at the Kavli Institute of Particle Astrophysics & Cosmology, Stanford University and SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. Image courtesy American Museum of Natural History; (right) Ball State University Photo Services; (bottom left) Art Spiegelman, *Lead Pipe Sunday no. 2* (detail), 1997. Copyright © 1997 by Art Spiegelman. Used by permission of the artist and The Wylie Agency LLC.

**p. 16-18:** Sheldon Museum of Art.

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**p. 46-47:** Milwaukee Public Museum.

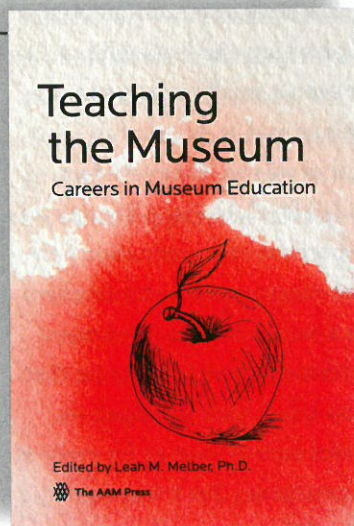
**p. 48:** Harriet Beecher Stowe Center.

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**NEW** from



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## Streamlined Reaccreditation Self-Study Debuts in January

The Accreditation program has been in the process of metamorphosis over

the past few years, with the goal of making it more accessible, more streamlined and of more value to museums—all without diluting the standards of the museum field that are at the core of accreditation.

The latest step is the January 2014 debut of the new, streamlined, online reaccreditation self-study. An essential step in the accreditation process, the self-study has proven beneficial to program participants, with many saying it fostered a more thorough understanding of the museum's operations across departments, which in turn resulted in a renewed spirit of collaboration among staff.

The online self-study was tested and employed by a group of 10 pilot museums throughout the fall of 2013. The Accreditation Commission will release the link and instructions to more accredited museums (the next class due for review) in January. All 1,000-plus accredited museums received a link to a PDF of the self-study in early fall 2013, enabling them to begin gathering the requisite documents and data for completion of their next self-study.

The online initial self-study (for those who are seeking their first accreditation) is still in development, with an intended launch date in the spring. If your museum is interested in applying for accreditation in 2014, now's the time to complete Core Documents Verification, a prerequisite for accreditation. Learn more at [aam-us.org/resource/assessment-programs](http://aam-us.org/resource/assessment-programs).

Every museum (accredited or non-accredited) is urged to complete an organizational profile and share their operational data ([aam-us.org](http://aam-us.org), Login, Edit Profile, My Organization). These simplified forms will enable AAM to ensure its museum data is more up-to-date and powerful when advocating with Congress and key government agencies. Help us help you by sharing your data, even if you are not due for reaccreditation or do not intend to seek accreditation in the near future. This data is especially critical now, with Museums Advocacy Day scheduled for February 24-25 in Washington, DC.

## AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo More Global Than Ever in 2014

Museum professionals from more than 50 countries are expected to be on hand in Seattle for the 2014 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, May 18-21. Our international colleagues are being lured to the Emerald City by the wide range of international offerings, including many new features. These include:

- program sessions providing cross-cultural perspectives on such crucial topics as organizational change and exhibition planning
- sessions showcasing international case studies on museums making profound community impacts around the world
- intimate, conversational roundtable discussions in the International Lounge focused on emerging issues impacting the global museum industry
- opportunities to forge partnerships with U.S. museums through the Museums Connect program

In addition, the annual meeting provides numerous networking opportunities, as well as venues for exchanging ideas about launching and sharing traveling exhibitions, particularly with our colleagues from China. If your museum is looking to work globally, the 2014 AAM Annual Meeting in Seattle is an ideal forum for sparking those collaborations.



PEOPLE

**Charles Clark** to operations director and **James Towle** to facility director, Castle in the Clouds, Moultonborough, New Hampshire.



**Cynthia Conway** to curator of education, Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, California.



**Mary M. Tinti** to associate curator, Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

**Daniel S. Palmer** to Leon Levy Assistant Curator, The Jewish Museum, New York.

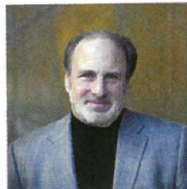
**Courtney Spusta** to curator of education and **Janet Studnicka** to director of development, Wichita Art Museum, Kansas.

**Marvin Bolt** to curator of science and technology, The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York.

**Ellyn Van Evra** to curator of interpretation, Deadwood History, Inc., Deadwood, South Dakota.

**Sarah Beeks Higdon** to director, advancement, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

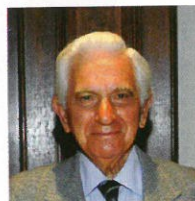
**Alexis Lowry Murray** to curator, David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.



**David Mickenberg** to Priscilla Payne Hurd President and CEO, Allentown Art Museum of the Lehigh Valley, Allentown, Pennsylvania.



**Homer Babbitt** to assistant director of development, Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.



**Gib Chapman** and **Stanley Kreitman** to board of trustees, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, New York.

**Jon Seydl** to director of curatorial affairs, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

**Kevin W. Tucker** to The Margot B. Perot Senior Curator of Decorative Arts and Design, Dallas Museum of Art.

KUDOS

**Bess Williamson** is the winner of the first Katherine C. Grier Prize for the best recent article in *Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture*. She received the 2013 prize for "Getting a Grip: Disability in American Industrial Design of the Late Twentieth Century," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Volume 46, Number 4, Winter 2012. Williamson is assistant professor in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago



The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) has elected **Anne-Imelda Radice**, executive director of the American Folk Art Museum, to active membership. The AAMD represents a select group of directors of the largest museums throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. Eligibility pertains to the purpose, size and standards of operation of an art museum, and is also based on the qualifications of both the individual director and the specific museum.



The New England Museum Association (NEMA) has honored retired Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium Executive Director **Charlie Browne** with its first Lifetime Achievement Award. NEMA presented the award at its 2013 Annual Meeting on November 15 as part of the group's 95th annual conference in Newport, Rhode Island. NEMA created the Lifetime Achievement Award this year to honor the career of an individual with at least 35 years in the museum field.

Browne worked at the Fairbanks Museum, located in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, for 35 years, 21 of them as executive director. He has been a leader in the museum community nationwide, with service to NEMA as a long-time board member and officer.

The New England Museum Association (NEMA) has elected **Susan Funk**, vice president of Mystic Seaport Museum, as president of its board of directors. The election was held at the organization's 2013 annual meeting on November 15 as part of the group's 95th annual conference in Newport, Rhode Island.

"We're very excited to have Susan on board," said NEMA Executive Director Dan Yaeger. "Her leadership and commitment to the organization will help take us to the next level of success in serving the museum field."

Funk is executive vice president of Mystic Seaport, where she oversees and coordinates the activities of the museum education, exhibitions, maritime studies, curatorial, watercraft, HR and visitor services departments. She is responsible for operational and strategic planning, program evaluation and participation in trustee committees, and management of all museum functions associated with the Mystic Seaport visitor experience. Funk coordinated Mystic Seaport's successful accreditation self-study for AAM in 2004-2005. She is active in the field, serving on the NEMA board and regularly serving as an AAM MAP reviewer and accreditation site committees. In July 2005 she participated in the Getty Institute's prestigious Museum Leadership Institute.

IN MEMORIAM

**Richard (Rick) Hartung**, former director of the Rock County Historical Society (RCHS) and of the Evanston Historical Society, died on Oct. 30 after a long illness.

During his 25 years as director of the Rock County Historical Society in Janesville, Wisconsin, Hartung oversaw the opening of the first museum of Rock County history, the development



of local history archival holdings, and exhibitions on the significance of regional industries and agriculture.

During his tenure, Hartung advocated for meaningful interpretive history connecting today's audiences to their historical counterparts, and worked to expand community awareness of historic preservation and adaptive reuse. After leaving the RCHS, Hartung led the Evanston History Center located in the Charles Gates Dawes House, a lakefront mansion in Evanston, Illinois, named for and once home to the vice president under Calvin Coolidge. After retirement, Hartung ran a small business and consulted on private National Register nominations.

Educator and designer **Michael Sand**, who developed interactive and technology-driven exhibits and learning spaces in the Boston area and across the country, died of liver cancer November 18 in Boston. He was 73.

Sand pioneered an unconventional "hands-on" approach to exhibit design now common in children's museums and learning spaces, and his work pioneered the use of technology and computers to assist learning, long before the phrase "user-centered design" even existed.

Sand helped launch a wave of innovative children's museums in dozens of cities across the country, including Pittsburgh; New Orleans; Richmond, Virginia;

and Washington, DC, creating a new standard that embraced play as a meaningful pedagogical tool. "We tend to make noisy museums," he once told the *Boston Herald*, "because people tend to learn when they're entertained."

A renowned designer, Sand also put his immense creativity and innovative spirit to work as an educational and city planning consultant through his firm, Michael Sand, Inc. (later re-named Rare Media Well Done). Among his clients were the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, the National Park Service's Fanueil Hall-Old State House complex, publisher MacMillan and Company, and the City of New York. His work made a profound impact on his beloved, adopted hometown of Boston, in such venues as the Boston Museum of Science, the Boston Children's Museum, Computer Museum, Franklin Park Zoo and the City of Cambridge, where the fleet of orange utility trucks has for decades been emblazoned with "THE WORKS" logo designed by Sand.

## CAREERS

### Making Your Contacts Count

BY ANNE BABER AND LYNNE WAYMON

"Networking" is an activity or goal encouraged by our colleagues as essential to career success. But networking can be a daunting, frightening proposition. In truth, networking is nothing more than connecting with people and building relationships, but it all starts with a contact. Everyone has contacts, but not everyone has contacts that count. Networking is a set of professional competencies that most professionals embrace as essential to doing their jobs well, fostering excellence in their institutions, and contributing to the well-being of the field.

#### Eight Networking Competencies

##### 1. Capitalize on Your Style

Many people have challenges with networking that keep them from doing it well—or at all. If you are one of these reluctant networkers, you can learn to appreciate how your personality and mindset affect your ability to build relationships. Decide to adopt a positive attitude toward this essential workplace competency. Networking is teaching others about themselves and learning about other people. When you realize the benefits—for your own career and your organization's success—you are ready to begin learning strategies that make you feel more confident as you connect.

##### 2. Take a Strategic Approach

Few people take a strategic approach to networking. Most have only the vaguest idea why they are networking. What's your networking goal? Do you want to get a job? Get behind your museum's initiatives? Get visible in your museum? Get a project up and running? Get known in the field? Get more out of conferences and meetings? Having answers to these and other questions will help you craft your networking strategy. Decide what's on your networking agenda every day. What do you have to give (tips, shortcuts, trends, ideas, enthusiasm)? What do you want to get, find, solve, understand better, learn more about, connect with, brainstorm about, be ready for, be more aware of?

*Continued on page 62*



### 3. Envision the Ideal Network

Everybody has four networks: work colleagues, the workplace, colleagues in the field, and a personal network of family and friends. Each of these networks comes with its benefits, challenges and opportunities. Identify and evaluate various relationships in your four networks, then decide whose help you might need and whom you might help. Then plan next-step conversations with each of these contacts.

### 4. Develop Relationships

Grow relationships through six stages of trust-building, and know the appropriate things to do and say at each of these stages.

- **Accidents** are people you meet at random and will never run into again. You might meet and chat with someone at the Alliance Annual Meeting; you may or may not see this person again unless you make the effort. To build that relationship, you'll have to reach out.
- **Acquaintances** are people you meet through others. A co-worker has invited you to join her for lunch with a colleague from another museum and you have a rich conversation with that person. Your co-worker provides the link to that acquaintance.
- **Associates** belong to a group you belong to. Because you have the group in common, like one of the Alliance's 22 Professional Networks, you have a good chance of seeing each other and building a relationship.

- **Actives** are people with whom you are actively exchanging information. For example, you are one of four presenters in an upcoming Alliance webinar, meeting by phone and online throughout the planning process. These exchanges give you the chance to experience and learn about each other's character and competence.
- **Advocates** are people who believe in your character and competence and who will stick their necks out for you and pass your name along.
- **Allies** form your innermost circle—people you turn to for advice, and commiserate and celebrate with. Your trusted allies will be there when you are grappling with important career decisions.

### 5. Increase Social Acumen

Become comfortable, confident and professional as you master relationship rituals. Teaching your name and making it memorable and learning someone else's name are key skills. Knowing when to exchange business cards for maximum effect, understanding how to join groups of people who are already talking and ending conversations with the future in mind are all essential skills.

### 6. Showcase Expertise

Use examples and stories to teach your contacts about your expertise, experience, talents and interests. When someone says, "What do you do?" give one sentence telling what you want your contact to remember about you, not just your job title. Then add a vivid example to show how you saved the day, solved the problem or served the visitor.

You want your expertise to stick in the minds of your contacts so they can connect you with the right opportunities.

### 7. Assess Opportunities

What are the best networking arenas for you? Look at your goals. Take time to decide if a specific group meets your needs. You won't reap any benefits if you don't attend—and participate. Plan your involvement so that you get what you want out of a group. Also, know when to discontinue your membership. If you can't justify your time and your dues, opt out. Also remember that networking isn't limited to groups outside your organization. Seek out and plan how to take advantage of (or create your own) internal networking opportunities.

### 8. Deliver Value

To capitalize on your networking efforts:

- *Ask good questions* and listen generously.
- *Be alert for opportunities* to connect your contacts and to provide access to resources, talent and opportunities.
- *Up your conference ROI* by bringing back business intelligence and new contacts.
- *Encourage and support a networking culture* throughout your organization.

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*Anne Baber and Lynne Waymon are founders, Contacts Count, Silver Spring, Maryland. This article is excerpted from the chapter "The Eight Networking Competencies" in A Life in Museums: Managing Your Museum Career (2012, The AAM Press), available from the AAM Bookstore.*





## Las Vegas Natural History Museum

**First Accredited: July 2013**

**Annual Budget: \$820,000**

**Staff: 10**



The entire accreditation process was an undeniable benefit to the Las Vegas Natural History Museum. The museum deliberately used the accreditation journey as a reflection tool for operations, collections, education and governance. The board, staff and volunteers all realized the process mattered as much as, and in some cases more than, the ultimate outcome.

We sought accreditation for a variety of reasons. As a museum in a community that caters to tourists and must compete with casino-owned museums, we have remained committed to the children and families in our community. Even with a collapsing economy and dwindling funding streams, we have persevered and have steadfastly worked toward progress, improvement and expansion, viewing these as critical to our mission.

The museum has always been proud to serve as an extension of the public education classroom, particularly in science education and through our Las Vegas Science & Technology Festival. Understanding the tremendous strain on school budgets, the museum has set the goal of ensuring that every student has an opportunity to visit the museum.

Accreditation requires museums to reflect deeply on every aspect of their operations and to be prepared to be scrutinized in every detail of their successes and failures. But no matter the outcome, the effort (although daunting at times) is extremely helpful to the organization, board and staff development. For that reason alone, I urge everyone to seek accreditation. And as an accredited museum, I can assure you it makes us proud.

—Marilyn Gillespie, Director





In the game of chess, the queen is a coveted and powerful piece, free to move unpredictably and fiercely within a regimented construct. “A Queen Within: Adorned Archetypes, Fashion and Chess” explores every iteration of a queen, from the chess board to the catwalk. Queenly qualities—strength, femininity and the ability to rewrite the rules of a patriarchal system—come through in dramatic fashions by some of today’s most celebrated designers, including Gucci, Viktor & Rolf and, appropriately, Alexander McQueen. To April 18. **Venue:** World Chess Hall of Fame, St. Louis, MO.



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- **free** registration for online learning opportunities
- customized research assistance through the Information Center
- discounts at the Bookstore
- ability to join any or all of the Alliance's 22 Professional Networks
- free subscriptions to a range of Alliance publications and e-newsletters, including *Museum* magazine and *Dispatches* from the Center for the Future of Museums
- **free** registration for Museums Advocacy Day, held each February in Washington, DC
- your own membership card that many museums honor with free/reduced admissions



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