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MUSEUM (ISSN 0027-4089)
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018, VOLUME 97, NO. 6
PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY (J/F, M/A, M/J, J/A, S/O, N/D)
BY THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS
2451 CRYSTAL DRIVE, SUITE 1005, ARLINGTON, VA 22202; 202-289-1818; FAX 202-289-6578; WWW.AAM-US.ORG.

Annual subscription rate is $38. Copies are mailed to all members. Single copy is $7. Overseas airmail is an additional $45. Membership in the Alliance includes $22 from annual membership dues applicable to a subscription to MUSEUM, except for students and retirees. (This notice is required by the US Postal Service.) POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSEUM, 2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005, Arlington, VA 22202.

MUSEUM is indexed in The Art Index, which is published quarterly and available in public libraries. The magazine is available from ProQuest in the following formats: microform, electronic and paper. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Alliance. Preferred Periodical postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the US by Lane Press, Burlington, VT.

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Less Is More

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, an old photograph I recently unearthed is probably worth a few more.

There I stand in front of a chicken coop, in knee-high boots, along with Angela Yau, director at the Steppingstone Farm Museum in Havre de Grace, Maryland. Angela is holding one of the living-farm museum's chickens.

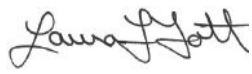
Two of the three of us seem happy; the chicken may have been concerned that I was going to hold it next. (It needn't have worried.)

I mention the story because our issue this month is dedicated to the power of small museums. I visited Steppingstone in my early days as president and CEO of AAM, and I learned a lesson that still resonates today. Small museums have to do everything that large museums do, and their need for resourcefulness can be a benefit: it drives creativity.

At that time, Steppingstone had a budget of $300,000 and just a few full-time employees. And they did it all: managed the finances, signed the paychecks, greeted the guests, envisioned the bigger picture, and managed the collection—which in this case meant feeding the chickens.

Directors of small museums often feel like they never have the resources they need. But guess what? All museum directors, regardless of their institution's size, feel that way. And small museums, through their ingenuity, can often teach the bigger players a lesson or two.

For example, there's no reason to assume that small museums can't, or shouldn't, pursue the path to excellence that leads to accreditation. In this issue, for example, we learn about the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum near Tallahassee, Florida, whose executive director, Grace Robinson, saw the power of accreditation and went for it. Grace was one half of the full-time staff at Gadsden, but that did not stop the museum from being accredited.



At AAM, 59 percent of our member museums have zero to three full-time staff. An additional 21 percent have 4 to 10 full-time staff. And 14 percent of all accredited museums have a budget under $500,000.

We hope our focus on small museums this month demonstrates to our members who work at museums of all sizes that the pursuit of excellence is not dependent on high staff counts or large annual budgets.

Just don't ask me to hold the chicken.

As we near the year's end, it's a perfect time to register at the best rates for our 2019 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo slated for May 19–22 in New Orleans—and to apply for a scholarship if you need help with the costs of attending.

On behalf of the AAM staff and board, I wish you a joyous holiday season.

Laura L. Lott is the Alliance's president and CEO. Follow Laura on Twitter at **@LottLaura**.

Population Shifts and Feelings

60.7%

Percentage of the US population that was white, non-Hispanic in 2017, compared to 85.4% in 1960.

6 in 10

Americans think a diverse population makes America better; 1 in 10 says it makes it worse.

In 2045, the US population is projected to be minority majority for the first time.

Due to an editing error, the September/October 2018 By the Numbers presented information that seemed contradictory. The full infographic can be downloaded from wilkeningconsulting.com/datamuseum/museum-visitation-rates-the-complete-data-story.

iStock.com/Vera_Petrunina

By the Numbers was compiled by Susie Wilkening, principal of Wilkening Consulting, wilkeningconsulting.com. Reach Susie at Susie@wilkeningconsulting.com.
Sources: US Census Bureau; Pew Research Center

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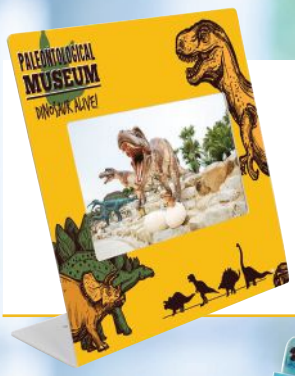

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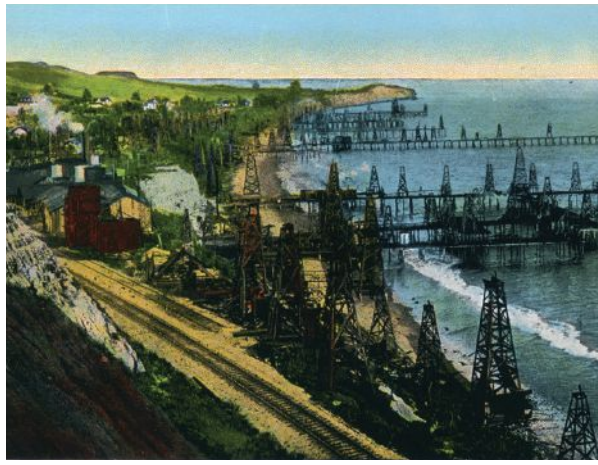

National Museum of American Illustration

"American Illustration and the First World War" celebrates the 100th anniversary of the resolution of "The War to End All Wars" by honoring the essential work that American illustrators accomplished in swaying opinions and rallying national support for the war effort. Featuring original paintings, works on paper, vintage posters, and accompanying artifacts, the exhibition highlights the critical role American illustrators played in the outcome of the war.

Dates: through May 2019

Location: Newport, RI

Learn more: americanillustration.org/exhibitions

Florida Keys History & Discovery Center

With the "Walk Historic Islamorada" tour, available through the free Florida Stories app, residents and visitors can stroll through a historic stretch of Islamorada and learn amazing details of Florida Keys history. The narrated, 10-stop walking tour, which includes historic images, is an approximately one-mile journey. The tour reveals stories of early pioneers, the most powerful hurricane to ever strike North America, the Red Cross houses built for survivors, the memorial built to honor the hundreds of hurricane victims, and one of the few bona fide pirate stories connected to the island chain.

Location: Islamorada, FL

Partner: Florida Humanities Council

Learn more: keysdiscovery.com

Santa Barbara Maritime Museum

"The History of Oil in the Santa Barbara Channel" traces the history and the economic and environmental impact of oil in the channel, from the first prehistoric uses of naturally occurring oil and asphalt seeps by the native Chumash peoples through the 19th- and 20th-century discoveries and use of asphalt for paving and oil for fuel. The exhibition features the role of oil in the developments of offshore rigs, commercial deep diving, life on and below the platforms, the 1969 and 2015 oil spills off the coast of Santa Barbara, the origin of Earth Day, and the rise of the environmental movement.

Location: Santa Barbara, CA

Learn more: sbmm.org

What's New at Your Museum?

Do you have a new temporary or permanent exhibition, education program, partnership/initiative, or building/wing? Tell us at bit.ly/MuseumNewsAAM, and it might be featured in an upcoming issue.

National Museum of American Illustration; Jerry Wilkinson collection; collection of Peter Jordano

Isabella Kirkland, *Gone*; Tiffany and Gorham Exhibits-Manufactures Building from *Official Views of the World's Columbian Exposition* by C.D. Arnold and H.D. Higinbotham

Whatcom Museum

"Endangered Species: Artists on the Front Line of Biodiversity" highlights more than 50 artists who celebrate biodiversity's beauty, interpret natural and human-caused extinctions, and focus on endangered species from diverse ecosystems. The exhibition surveys a wide range of approaches and media used by artists spanning the 19th through 21st centuries and explores artists' pivotal role in raising awareness about biodiversity's importance.

Dates: through Jan. 6, 2019

Location: Bellingham, WA

Partners: National Endowment for the Arts and The Norcliffe Foundation

Learn more: whatcommuseum.org/exhibition/endangered-species

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum

"Treasures from the White City: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893" features pieces by Louis Comfort Tiffany created for the World's Fair chapel, substantial silver selections designed by both Gorham Manufacturing Company and Tiffany & Company, and artifacts from the exposition, such as tickets, maps, and programs. The exhibition is a celebration of the fair's 125th anniversary.

Dates: through Jan. 6, 2019

Location: Chicago, IL

Learn more: driehausmuseum.org/exhibitions

Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields

"Sensual / Sexual / Social: The Photography of George Platt Lynes" explores Lynes' visionary work as a New York–based commercial fashion and ballet photographer and his personal passion, the male nude, which was taboo and illegal in the 1930s and 1940s. Lynes also turned his lens on his social circle—the artistic and literary minds of the mid-20th century—who accepted him as a gay man during a period of harsh anti-LGBT laws in America.

Dates: through Feb. 24, 2019

Location: Indianapolis, IN

Partner: Kinsey Institute, Indiana University

Learn more: discovernewfields.org/calendar/sensualsexualsocial-photography-george-platt-lynes

San Bernardino County Museum

"Minerals Rock! Unearthing the Human Element" showcases minerals in an interpretive context that goes beyond pretty crystals and gems and illustrates how minerals affect everyday life. A multidisciplinary approach explores Native American use of rocks and minerals, the history of mining in the region, how everyday products and technology depend upon their mineral components, and today's challenges with both mining and the disposal of mineral products and e-waste.

Location: Redlands, CA

Learn more: sbcounty.gov/museum/exhibits/exhibits.htm

Carnegie Science Center

In June, Carnegie Science Center opened the PPG Science Pavilion, a $33 million, LEED Gold certified, 48,000-square-foot expansion. The pavilion features nine FedEx STEM Learning Labs, a gallery for world-class touring exhibitions, and a modern event rental space with an unparalleled view of where the city's three rivers meet.

Location: Pittsburgh, PA

Learn more: carnegiesciencecenter.org/about/ppg-science-pavilion

George Platt Lynes, *Jean Babilee in L'Amour et son Amour*, collections of the Kinsey Institute, Indiana University, © Estate of George Platt Lynes; Melissa Russo, San Bernardino County Museum; Bethany Schreck

Science World British Columbia

"The Science Behind Pixar" is an interactive exhibition that showcases the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) concepts used by the artists and computer scientists who help bring Pixar's award-winning films to the big screen. Featuring more than 40 interactive elements, the exhibition demonstrates the technology that supports the creativity and artistry of Pixar's storytellers.

Dates: through Jan. 6, 2019

Location: Vancouver, BC

Learn more: scienceworld.ca/pixar

© Disney/Pixar; Laurie Simmons, *How We See/Ajak (Green)*, courtesy the artist and Salon 94

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

"Laurie Simmons: Big Camera/Little Camera" showcases the artist's photographs from 1976 to the present, a small selection of sculpture, and two films. Simmons's career-long exploration of archetypal gender roles, especially women in domestic settings, is the primary subject of this exhibition and is a topic as poignant today as it was in the late 1970s, when she began to use props and dolls as stand-ins for people and places.

Dates: through Jan. 27, 2019

Location: Fort Worth, TX

Partner: MCA Chicago

Learn more: themodern.org/exhibitions

POINT
OF VIEW

A Work in Progress

Diversifying your small museum's volunteer corps might seem daunting, but it's worth the sustained effort.

By Richard Harker

As this country's demographics change, small museums need to adjust. How do we continue to be, or become, essential community resources that reflect the entirety of our communities?

This is a much-discussed question in the field these days. Recent, field-wide conversations regarding museums and race have acknowledged that our institutions need to not only tell the stories of under-represented groups, but also ensure that our boards, staff, and volunteers resemble the communities we serve.

Yet for many small museums, making changes to diversify the volunteer corps seems at the least daunting, and at the worst impossible.

Museum volunteers are typically older, more educated, and whiter than society writ large. Changing this reality is particularly challenging at small museums with limited budgets because we rely more heavily on volunteers to handle essential day-to-day functions. Throughout my career working in small museums, I've often wanted to introduce changes

Local students clean headstones during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service at Historic Oakland Cemetery.

Historic Oakland Foundation

to the volunteer program, yet I have feared that losing one or two volunteers in a "shake-up" would prove drastically problematic. What would happen to our tours if we lost some guides, or how could we staff the visitor center?

Adjusting or changing something that is perceived as indispensable, yet fragile, can seem insurmountable. It also can seem impractical given the time constraints and pressures we face in small institutions. Despite our best intentions, where would we find the time to make these changes?

It's true: making changes to your volunteer corps requires courage and commitment. But the rewards can help your museum thrive.

Work with Higher Education

In my previous role as the education and outreach manager at the Museum of History and Holocaust Education at Kennesaw State University, I addressed the issue of diversity by recruiting university students as volunteers to work alongside our long-time, mostly retired, well-educated, white volunteers. This initiative not only helped the university museum fulfill its function as an essential university resource, but also attracted a younger and more ethnically and racially diverse group of museum volunteers.

This program allowed our visitors, especially the thousands of local school-children who visited each year, to see people who looked like them when they walked through the doors. Younger volunteers had the opportunity to connect with community members and develop contacts and skills by learning from, and interacting with, our more experienced guides and docents. Likewise, the older volunteers were energized and excited to work side by side with university students.

However, this volunteer program did not come without its challenges for staff. We quickly learned that how we worked with the students needed to be significantly different from how we worked with older volunteers. These changes included communicating by text messaging rather than email, holding shorter training sessions, providing different assignments that offered younger volunteers additional support if needed, and setting simple expectations of commitment and time. In short, we had to learn to be more nimble. But these changes to the volunteer corps provided a richer experience for everyone, including our visitors, who started to see themselves in the people they encountered within the museum, including our staff and volunteers who informed the programming.

Get the Whole Museum Involved

Making changes to diversify a volunteer corps cannot happen in a vacuum. If the stories that your institution is telling in its exhibitions or programs, or the composition of your board and staff, don't mirror efforts to recruit more diverse volunteers, then you may experience barriers to success. Why would someone want to volunteer at an organization that does not reflect their identity, experiences, or history?

In my current role as director of programming and volunteers at the Historic Oakland Foundation at Historic Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta, Georgia, I oversee nearly 250 volunteers (with a lot of help from my amazing coworkers, thankfully!). These volunteers are truly indispensable to the critical functions of the

BE THE BEST VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Are you interested in engaging with other volunteer managers to discuss the best practices and challenges of working with museum volunteers? If so, join the American Association for Museum Volunteers (AAMV). AAMV is the only professional network dedicated exclusively to museum volunteers and volunteering. Find out more at **aamv.org**.

Actors portray Oakland Cemetery residents during the annual Capturing the Spirit of Oakland Halloween Tours. Gloria Elder portrays Atlanta baker Myra Miller in October 2017.

organization, including visitor services, tours, special events, and gardening.

In keeping with our organization's core values, we are currently trying to recruit younger, more racially and ethnically diverse volunteers. We've made strides in the last couple of years as we've delved into the preservation and restoration of the cemetery's African American burial section and uncovered—in some cases literally—new stories that we've built into our ever-evolving tours and programs. For example, in our general tour, "Sights, Symbols, and Stories of Oakland," we now spend a significant amount of time in the African American burial grounds telling the stories of Carrie Steele Logan, the founder of the nation's oldest black orphanage, and Selena Sloan Butler, the founder of the nation's first black PTA.

Changes and evolutions of this kind, however, are not necessarily fast-paced. Some people in Atlanta see Oakland Cemetery as a white, wealthy place, and that viewpoint isn't likely to change overnight. But in an effort to make Oakland Cemetery more representative of our geography and society, we are working with communities outside of the immediate neighborhoods surrounding the cemetery, including those in southwest Atlanta, and with organizations like the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center in the city to recruit new volunteers. We also will continue to introduce programming that reflects the entire history of Atlanta. As an institution, we are also reexamining the composition of our board, staff, donors, and other key stakeholders.

In my short time at the Historic Oakland Foundation I've been heartened by the institutional support as we begin the slow, hard, but rewarding work of diversifying our whole organization. However, I know that it has not been, and will not be, without its challenges. As our small staff (15 full time, 2 part time) continues to rely on a large group of volunteers, time for strategic planning, active recruitment, and relationship building in communities that have not historically had a relationship with the foundation or cemetery will take time to cultivate.

I am excited to build a volunteer corps and organization that reflect our city. I want to engage with individuals and communities who may not currently see themselves in Historic Oakland Cemetery. But I realize that this will require a sustained, deep commitment. One-off, token gestures will not work.

Diversifying our volunteer corps is a work in progress that is, and will continue to be, time intensive. But it is crucial to the long-term health of the institution.

Richard Harker is director of programming and volunteers at the Historic Oakland Foundation at Historic Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta, Georgia. He is also the president of the American Association for Museum Volunteers.

Historic Oakland Foundation

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING VISITORS IS HARD WORK

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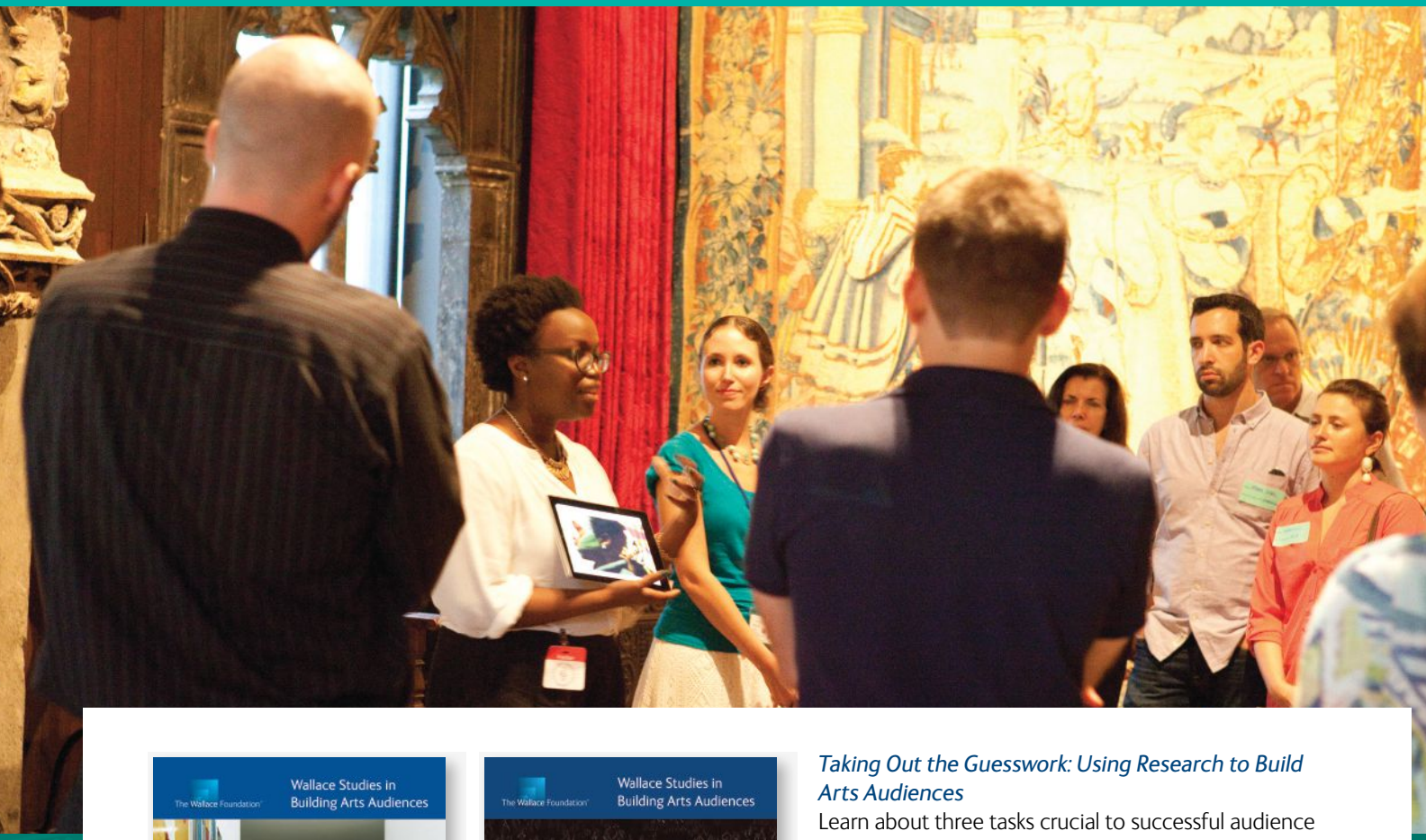

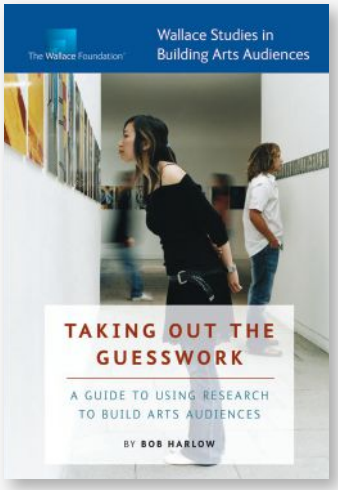

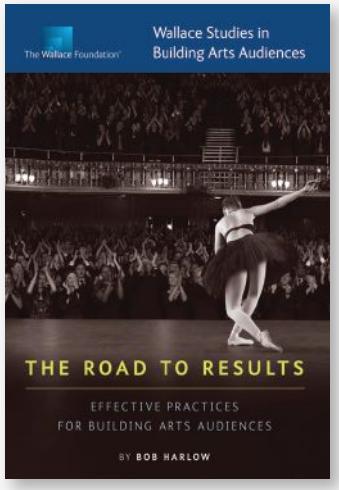

Taking Out the Guesswork: Using Research to Build Arts Audiences
Learn about three tasks crucial to successful audience building: understanding potential audiences, creating effective promotional materials, and tracking and assessing progress.

The Road to Results: Effective Practices for Building Arts Audiences
Based on case studies of 10 arts organizations that undertook audience-building projects as part of the Wallace Excellence Awards initiative, this guide and infographic pinpoint nine practices that successful efforts had in common.

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Download these reports and many more for free at **www.wallacefoundation.org**.

By Dennis Pierce

The Quest for Excellence

Small museums might not think they have the resources to pursue accreditation, but these museums prove it's possible.

When Grace Robinson was director of education programs at Florida's Vero Beach Museum of Art, she experienced the benefits of AAM accreditation firsthand.

Robinson saw how adopting high standards and following established best practices can prevent a museum from wasting precious resources and "going around in circles," constantly dealing with the same problems. She also saw how accreditation offered a high-profile stamp of approval that lent credibility to the museum's entire operations.

"Quality breeds success," she says. "As you grow and demonstrate that you're successful, resources naturally follow."

iStock.com/sayhmog

Children pose like Eluster Richardson's figurative paintings during a Gadsden Arts ArtReach session. Through partnerships with schools and organizations, the ArtReach program brings studio art and interpretive experiences to children.

So when Robinson became executive director of the Gadsden Arts Center & Museum near Tallahassee in 2005, she wanted her new institution to become accredited as well. However, at her previous institution, there had been five people in her department alone; her new museum had just two employees in all—including her.

But Robinson was not deterred. Under her leadership, the museum committed to meeting AAM's Core Standards for Museums, the umbrella standards for all museums. The standards cover seven areas, including establishing public trust and accountability, delivering quality education and interpretation, the responsible stewardship of collections, financial stability, and risk management.

Gadsden Arts Center's advisory board formed working committees around each of these topics and created a five-year strategic plan. The museum also partnered with Florida State University to provide students with hands-on museum training and the museum with additional capacity to complete necessary projects.

Over the course of a decade, Gadsden gradually put into place the requirements it would need to seek accreditation. In February 2016, Gadsden—which has an annual budget of less than $400,000 and a staff that now includes three full-time and four part-time employees—achieved accreditation for the first time.

"That was an enormous statement to our peers, to our donors, and to art collectors about who we are and how we do things," Robinson says. "It has opened many doors for us." Specifically, donations to the museum's art collection have increased in both number and quality, and visitor traffic is up.

Becoming accredited can be tough for small museums with limited resources. But Gadsden and others are proof that it can be done if museum staff are willing to commit to the process.

"Any museum that is interested can put itself on a path to accreditation by aiming to do everything according to best practices in the field," Robinson says.

> "Any museum that is interested can put itself on a path to accreditation by aiming to do everything according to best practices in the field."
>
> — Grace Robinson, Gadsden Arts Center & Museum

RESOURCES

AAM Accreditation & Excellence Programs
aam-us.org/programs/accreditation-excellence-programs

Core Standards for Museums
aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-standards-for-museums

Tamara Hemmerlein, *How Can My Small Museum Handle Core Documents Verification?*
aam-us.org/2014/07/01/how-can-my-small-museum-handle-core-documents-verification

Ann Fortescue, *Excellence on a Small Scale*
aam-us.org/2015/07/01/excellence-on-a-small-scale

Gadsden Arts Center & Museum

"When you make that pledge of excellence, you reach a point where you are ready to apply for accreditation, because the two go hand in hand."

Planning and Intention

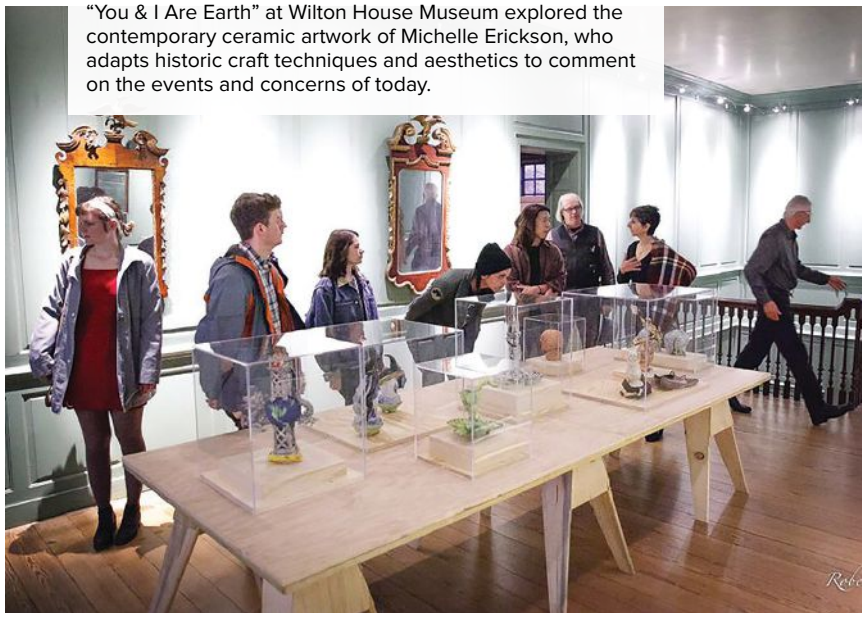
Preparing for accreditation requires careful planning and focus, and that's especially true for smaller institutions. Strong leadership is key.

When Brenda Abney was hired in December 2014 as director of the Tempe History Museum in Arizona, museum officials had already begun collecting the documentation needed for accreditation. Abney was tasked with moving the process forward to completion.

"With a small staff and budget, you need to prioritize tasks and align your budget to accomplish your objectives," she says. While assessing its readiness to apply, the museum also began a fundraising campaign to cover the costs involved in accreditation.

The self-assessment turned up some small but important changes the museum had to make. For instance: "We had people propping doors open all the time, and we realized that shouldn't happen," Abney says. "We convinced our facilities manager that we needed a card-swipe system for better security." About two years after Abney was hired, the museum earned its accreditation.

When a museum has several steps to take to reach accreditation, knowing where to start can be difficult. For the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum in Arkansas, refreshing its advisory committee and crafting a well-defined strategic plan helped put the museum on a path toward accreditation, which it achieved last year. "Getting that structure in place was key," says Director Adam Long.



"You & I Are Earth" at Wilton House Museum explored the contemporary ceramic artwork of Michelle Erickson, who adapts historic craft techniques and aesthetics to comment on the events and concerns of today.

Rob Hunter, 2016

4 KEYS TO ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

1. **Focus on quality over quantity.**
   Plan carefully, and be selective about what you do. When the recession hit in 2008, Gadsden Arts Center & Museum pared back its initiatives and focused only on what it could afford to do well. "A lot of museums try to be too much to too many people, and they end up not doing anything well," says Executive Director Grace Robinson. "Whatever you are doing, aim to do it at the highest quality you can."

2. **Don't go it alone.**
   Make the time to network with peer institutions, and ask colleagues who have been through the accreditation process for their advice. "Enlist the help of seasoned pros," Robinson advises, "so you learn from their mistakes instead of your own."

3. **Help staff take ownership.**
   Employees at small museums can be so busy with their day-to-day responsibilities that long-term goals get pushed aside. Set clear goals and milestones, and allocate time for completing them. During the accreditation process, Wilton House Museum staff members provided progress reports at each board meeting. "Each staff member reported on their own activities to the board," says Executive Director Keith MacKay. "That helped staff take ownership of the process."

4. **Don't sell yourself short.**
   Despite having a small staff and limited budget, "you can still achieve high standards," says Deb Nelson, director of the Cable Natural History Museum. "Even if we hadn't received accreditation on our first attempt, the process made us better—and we would have kept trying."

MORE ON THESE MUSEUMS

Institution	Budget	Full-time staff	Part-time staff
Cable Natural History Museum	$500,000	5	3
Gadsden Arts Center & Museum	$390,000	3	4
Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum	$250,000	3	2
Tempe History Museum	$619,000	5	2
Wilton House Museum	$500,000	2	3

Overcoming Obstacles

For small museums in particular, time is one of the biggest barriers to accreditation. With a limited staff, everyone is already juggling multiple roles—and there are only so many hours in a day.

As with any big project, the key to success is taking it one step at a time. For example, Abney created a timeline with specific goals and milestones to keep the accreditation effort on track. She also dedicated time within staff members' work schedules for tasks related to accreditation.

"Having scheduled days to work on this project was invaluable," Abney says. "Otherwise, the work would not have gotten done."

Leveraging the support of volunteers is also critical. The Cable Natural History Museum in Wisconsin enlisted the help of former staff and other members of the community. "We had someone who had worked here for 20 years and then left to become a teacher," says Deb Nelson, the museum's director. "She very generously helped us with our self-study."

The Cable Natural History Museum was established in 1967 in a small lake town with fewer than 900 residents. With no air conditioning and no special storage area for its collections, the museum's original building was far from qualifying for accreditation. But after a snowstorm collapsed the roof, the museum constructed a new building, which opened in 2008. Officials viewed this as an opportunity to pursue accreditation.

A collection stewardship grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services also helped ready the museum for accreditation. The museum hired a curator, added special film to its windows to preserve its collections, and paid more attention to disaster planning. "Our 3,800 items are very well taken care of now," Nelson says.

Besides relying on volunteers and grant funding, the museum added money to its budget to hire more part-time staff to complete some accreditation process tasks—and it also took full advantage of AAM's resources. "Don't be afraid to ask questions,"

Wilton House Museum, 2017

At Wilton House Museum's "Vivid View: The Art and Science of Paint Analysis," conservator Susan Buck's microscopic photography of paint layers from a dozen historic sites in Virginia were printed at large scale.

Education Director Anissa Ford talks with a young visitor about the A.E. Backus painting *Pines in the Back Country* during the "Florida's First Highwaymen" exhibition curated and hosted by Gadsden Arts.

Nelson advises. "AAM was a wonderful resource for us, and they made us feel like no question was too silly to ask."

Even with this support, challenges will inevitably crop up. When Wilton House Museum in Richmond, Virginia, applied for reaccreditation, the Accreditation Commission tabled its decision over concerns that the museum's strategic planning process wasn't involving the people it serves. The Commission also wanted to see the museum's plans to increase accessibility for visitors with disabilities.

The museum's executive director, Keith MacKay, asked his board to reaffirm its commitment to accreditation. The board approved the hiring of an outside consultant, Floricane LLC, to help address the Accreditation Commission's concerns. Floricane identified a number of stakeholder groups—including educators, museum peers, and residents of Richmond—and invited representatives from these groups to a planning roundtable.

Pursuing accreditation "is an important opportunity for museums to address how they function," MacKay says. "In our case, it led to significant changes that have made us a stronger museum. It was a really rich and rewarding experience." After an 18-month process, Wilton House Museum was reaccredited in June 2017.

Significant Benefits

Accreditation can be challenging for small museums, but the benefits can be significant.

"For donors who ask, 'If I give you this item, how will I know that you'll care for it?' you can show them you're accredited, which proves that you meet high standards," Abney says.

Accreditation has helped the Cable Natural History Museum recruit top-notch talent. "We're a tiny community. Our closest Target store is 100 miles away. Yet we had 111 people from across the United States apply for our naturalist position," Nelson says.

Museums also realize tremendous benefits simply from going through the process. "It gave us a reason to carve out time to do the things we should have been doing all along but weren't, like dusting and rotating our collections," Abney says. These good habits are now ingrained in the museum's operations.

Becoming accredited also improves staff morale, uniting everyone toward a common cause and instilling pride when the goal is met. Nelson notes that her institution is the only accredited museum in northwestern Wisconsin. "We celebrate that every day," she says.

Meeting high standards has helped Wilton House Museum double its annual fund in the past five years, MacKay says. In addition, the museum has received loans from banks that would only lend to accredited institutions.

MacKay couldn't be more sold on the process: "These conversations *need* to be happening."

Dennis Pierce is a freelance writer based in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Gadsden Arts Center & Museum

If You Build It

Fundraising success will come to small museums that implement a set of best practices.

By Karen L. Daly

"We need a bigger gift shop!"

"Raise our tour prices!"

"Weddings! Host more weddings!"

"The museum down the road raises zillions from their spring gala each year!"

"Can't we just get a grant for that?"

"When we finish this fundraising campaign, we'll be done, right? With fundraising?"

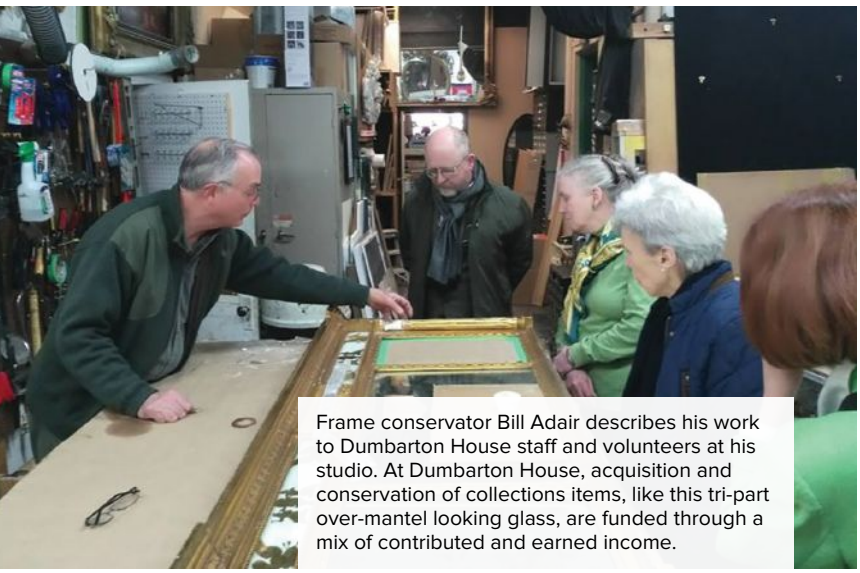
iStock.com/Madmaxer

If I had a dollar for every time a well-intentioned board member, volunteer, or staff member suggested one of the above fundraising tips, my organization would have a Harvard-like endowment and run a healthy surplus each year!

Alas, in my almost two decades working at small museums, I have found that most fundraising conversations or brainstorming sessions focus on three largely flawed ideas:

1. The Quick Fix Idea: there is one quick, easy way to bring in all the money we need to run our museum, and we just need to figure out what it is.
2. The Bake Sale Idea: you can solve a $100,000 fundraising challenge by selling $2 cupcakes (or mugs or bricks or scarves) to your friends and family.
3. The Let's Finish Fundraising Idea: if you are successful with this particular fundraising effort, you will be done—never again having to raise money to support your organization.

Unfortunately, these mindsets limit our small institutions, sometimes severely. Let's move away from these flawed mentalities and toward fundraising best practice. It's not hard to do; it just takes some planning—and then sticking to the plan.



Frame conservator Bill Adair describes his work to Dumbarton House staff and volunteers at his studio. At Dumbarton House, acquisition and conservation of collections items, like this tri-part over-mantel looking glass, are funded through a mix of contributed and earned income.

Courtesy of NSCDA/Dumbarton House

Why Not Be the Best?

Following fundraising best practice means focusing on three things: financial sustainability, philanthropic support from individuals, and developing a successful fundraising process.

Financial Stability

It's easy to get so bogged down in the annual budget details that we focus on financial viability rather than sustainability. In general, financially viable organizations are ones that are bringing in more income than they're spending. Certainly that's critical, but being viable does not ensure that your museum has the financial resources to be sustainable in the long term.

According to John Durel's publication *Building a Sustainable Nonprofit Organization*, a sustainable organization is one that, through beneficial circumstances and good professional practices, generates enough financial and community support to guarantee its continued existence on an indefinite basis. A key to establishing financial sustainability is to diversify income streams, ensuring that all your eggs aren't in one basket.

For a small museum, this means developing a good mix of funding sources, including contributed income (mainly from individuals plus some grants and corporate sponsorships), earned revenue (program fees, rental events, gift shop, etc.), and earnings from the endowment or invested funds. You also want a good mix within those various groups so that you're never overly reliant on one grant program or one "angel" donor.

Philanthropic Support Comes from Individuals

According to Giving USA, the overwhelming majority of philanthropic support in the US comes directly from individuals—either through donations during their lifetime (72 percent of total giving in 2017) or as bequests (9 percent of total giving).

Simply put, no small museum can maximize its fundraising opportunities relying only on grants or corporate giving. Successful fundraising in our nation means asking individual donors to contribute to your mission—and in 2017, more than $18 billion was directed toward arts, culture, and humanities. Rather than chasing competitive grants or elusive corporate gifts, most small museums would be best served developing a strong major gifts program focused on individuals who care about (and, better yet, are engaged in) your mission.

Fundraising Is an Ongoing Process

Both staff and board members need to let go of the notion that fundraising is something they need to check off and be done with to get back to the "real work." For the executive director and board, fundraising is the "real work," and it should be a part of all staff and volunteer duties. Without adequate funds, we can never truly advance our mission nor achieve our organizational vision, and fundraising ensures that we are constantly recruiting and engaging stakeholders in our effort.

To ensure your fundraising process is ongoing, follow these five steps.

1. **Identify.** Who are your prospects? How close are they to your organization? How much do they care about your mission? How much capacity do they have?
2. **Cultivate.** How can you build a relationship with a prospective donor? What is his or her specific interest in your museum and its programs? Who within your organization is connected to this prospect—or who could be?

3. **Solicit**. What will you ask for? How will you ask—direct mail, telephone, face-to-face, peer, online?
4. **Acknowledge.** How will you acknowledge gifts? Tax receipts should be offered at a minimum—and are required for gifts at $250 and above. Will you list names in a newsletter? Print/email an annual report? Personally call?
5. **Steward.** How will you keep in touch with donors after the gift? You want to tell donors how the project is progressing, their gift's impact, and what's next for the organization. This phase should lead back into the cultivation phase. Avoid jumping straight from acknowledging one donation to soliciting the next. Donor communication should be more than fundraising asks.

Applying Best Practices

Armed with these best practices, you can consider implementing fundraising ideas.

First, always start with your strategic plan. This should be a written, long-range document focused on the next three to five years. The strategic plan will include not only your organization's mission (what purpose it serves) but also your vision (what impact you want to have). Your strategic plan goals will have funding implications based on your answers to the following questions: What is your vision for the future? What steps will you take to reach that vision? How much will that cost?

Next, create a development/fundraising plan to reach that vision. Did that just stop you in your tracks? Keep moving by asking and answering these questions: How much do you want to raise? For what?

7 TIPS FOR FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

1. **Plan, plan, plan.** Consider your various fundraising options, gather stakeholder input, strategically identify the best path forward, and secure board or committee buy-in. That way, key players agree about the options being pursued—and why other options are not—and are engaged in the process from the outset.
2. **Communicate with your accountant/treasurer.** A number of years ago, we considered running a fundraising trip in which participants would pay a fee to join the tour and would be required to donate at a certain level. Sounds great, right? Our accountants reminded us, however, that IRS guidelines prohibit required donations—gifts must be voluntary to qualify for tax benefits. They saved us from a significant headache.
3. **Develop a fundraising plan that aligns with your budget and strategic plan.** Your staff and board might be great at brainstorming ways to make money. But you need to align the development plan with the organizational budget and strategic plan so that you move forward with only those great ideas that you can afford, support your mission, and will move your organization closer to your vision.
4. **Start small, but deliberately.** Launching one well-considered fundraising effort will likely prove more successful than trying to start six new initiatives overnight.
5. **Consider the costs and profit margin before diving in**. Not all fundraising methods are created equal, and not all will benefit your organization in the long term. Carefully consider the short- and long-term staff, volunteer, and financial resources involved in any fundraising initiative.
6. **Cultivate existing donors.** Personal touches and relationships are at the core of successful fundraising programs. Retaining existing donors is much less costly than recruiting new ones. For small museums, this typically means directors must prioritize major donor cultivation and stewardship.
7. **Keep the fundraising message positive.** Crisis appeals lose their effectiveness if every annual fund letter is a plea to help keep the doors open. Also, donors want to invest in organizations that are successful, well-managed, and making an impact—so present your museum in that way.

Education Manager Stephanie Boyle leads a hard-hat tour at Dumbarton House during HVAC replacement and window conservation efforts in February 2017. Grant funding helped Dumbarton House leverage private donations to fund these capital improvements.

Courtesy of NSCDA/Dumbarton House

Who needs to be involved? What do they need to do? By when? How much will it cost? How will you evaluate success? How will you report on progress?

As you're building the fundraising plan, carefully consider the costs and benefits of each fundraising method. A board member once asked me, "What is the easiest way we can raise the most money?" That stuck with me and has helped me prioritize fundraising methods ever since. Below are some common ways small museums raise funds, with some considerations for each.

Museum memberships/friends: Who is your target audience? How will you entice them to join? How will you keep them engaged once they've joined?

Annual appeal/annual fund: How can you encourage major gifts? Are you focusing on member renewals? How do you cultivate and recognize donors?

Special solicitations/project-based fundraising: What individuals/groups have the greatest interest in this project?

Grants: How can you cultivate connections to local/regional/state funders? Have you researched grant options ahead of time—before you have a need to apply?

Corporate sponsorships: What is the reputation of a potential sponsor in your community? Avoid "strings attached" offers.

Planned giving: How can you encourage donors and prospects to include your museum in their wills? Where can you make available the appropriate language for donors? (Planned gifts are an important part of a long-term fundraising plan, but they typically are not helpful for current fundraising needs.)

Galas and events: Do you have a strong committee and an approved budget? Can you get donations to cover most costs? Is this a true fundraiser or only a friend-raiser?

Earned revenue—rental events, gift shops, program fees, admissions: Do your fees undervalue your site or program? However, don't run amok with non-mission-critical earned revenue efforts. For example, weddings can be lucrative for many sites, but you don't want to squeeze out mission-relevant field trips, tours, and workshops. Strive for a careful balance.

In the end, success really does breed success. Once you get that first grant award or major gift, you have professional credibility. And that will help you achieve the next grant or gift and will motivate others to join the effort.

Successful fundraising starts by accepting that there's no one quick funding fix. Instead, stick to best practices, involve every member of your staff and board, and carefully align your fundraising efforts with your strategic goals. Yes, it's more work than one great bake sale, but this process can actually lead to long-term financial sustainability.

Karen L. Daly is the executive director of Dumbarton House in Washington, DC.

RESOURCES

Sarah Sutton, *Is Your Museum Grant-Ready?* 2018

Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klinger (Eds.), *Financial Resource Development and Management, Small Museum Toolkit, Book Two,* 2013

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John Durel, *Building a Sustainable Nonprofit Organization*, 2009

Oregon Arts Commission

Percent for Art Program Supports Their Curatorial Vision with Argus

Hypersonic & Plebian Design, *Constructive Interference*, 2016. Photo by Hypersonic & Plebian Design.

Oregon's Percent for Art Program, managed by the Oregon Arts Commission, places high quality, accessible art in public places throughout the state of Oregon, and has been dedicated to the enhancement of public environments and the improvement of the character and quality of state buildings since 1975.

With two full time staff and contracted public art project managers, the Program actively manages new Percent for Art projects for agency and university clients across Oregon, as well as a growing collection that includes over 2,000 permanently sited artworks.

Until recently, record-keeping was done with digital content implemented through a library partner, spreadsheets, and paper files. There was no centralized database, which made reporting and searching capabilities limited. As the collection continued to grow and age, implementing a single web-based system with powerful capabilities became a priority.

The Arts Commission has now implemented the Argus collections management system. With Argus, all documentation is managed in one place. Plus, the integrated online interface will build awareness of Oregon's Percent for Art Program and expand public access to the collection to virtual visitors.

Program staff advises state agencies and universities on maintenance and conservation of works on their campuses. Argus enables staff to document the condition of objects on site as well as to run in-depth reports so the Arts Commission can provide better counsel to these clients.

Per Eleanor Sandys, Percent for Art Registrar & Research Specialist: "With Argus, the public art project managers have—for the first time—a holistic view of the collection at their fingertips. This allows them to work with selection committees to continue building the collection out in a way that is consistent with the Program's overall curatorial vision."

Within Argus, the Program uses four inter-related databases that capture information about the artworks, artists, projects, and sites. A feature of Argus particularly helpful for a public art program is the Site Module, which allows tracking of multiple artworks housed within the same building or campus. Because Argus is easily configurable without IT support, Program staff plan to eventually provide mapping functionality on the Portal.

Sandys describes Argus as "robust, with lots of back-end capabilities for administrative control."

"Seamless integration" with the public Portal (without a separate fee or complex design requirements) meant that she didn't have to advocate twice for two products—a huge benefit within a state agency.

The system's reporting capabilities represent another significant benefit. Prior to implementing Argus, Program staff populated reports manually, even cutting and pasting images. The ability to create reports instantly and access information quickly allows staff to be responsive to both internal and external inquiries.

Sandys recommends Argus to her peers in the public art sector for many reasons, including the fact that it's web-based, its reporting capabilities allow them to demonstrate the collection's importance, and the integrated Portal will dramatically expand awareness of and access to the collection.

"The Argus client services team is responsive, accessible, and professional," says Sandys. "Similarly, the software enables the Percent for Art team to be more responsive and professional while providing broad access to Oregon's art in public places."

Time to Partner Up

By E. Michael DiPaolo

When you build relationships with other community groups, your small museum can reach its full potential.

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My tenure at The Lewes Historical Society began what seems like a lifetime ago: on September 10, 2001. I had signed on to lead an organization in a small town (population 3,000) in a rural setting (Sussex County, Delaware, has an agricultural economy and produces more broiler chickens than any other county) but in a region that attracts millions of seasonal visitors to Delaware's beaches in Lewes, Rehoboth, Dewey, Bethany, and Fenwick Island.

Lewes is also a town that is acutely aware of its place in the state's history, as the first European settlement in Delaware. So when I evaluated the assets of my small museum, I saw a lot more potential than the $69,000 budget and 12 historic structures might suggest.

But to reach that potential, I knew that I had to engage with the community and other local museums, nonprofits, and businesses. I made that one of my first priorities and a key strategy to help grow the institution.

Of course, this outreach work was not without its challenges. While numerous studies and surveys show that museums are trusted sources of information in an increasingly polarized world, there is also a perception of historical societies, nonprofits, and museums that is not as flattering. As I started getting to know the Lewes landscape, community members referred to nonprofits, especially smaller ones, as unresponsive, difficult, unwilling to work with others, and having strange rules, and noted that our work often isn't cost-efficient.

I quickly realized that learning how to navigate the cultural differences between the nonprofit, for-profit, and government sectors would be my key to success. Doing so would produce mutually beneficial partnerships that would help grow the institution and keep it financially sound—and it has.

No matter how small your institution, you have something to offer other organizations in your community. You just need to be more visible and be open to any partnership.

A Christmas Tour of Lewes is the Lewes Historical Society's largest fundraising event, bringing thousands into town. Reenactors entertained visitors at the c. 1785 Burton-Ingram House.

Take Your Seat at the Table

Even if other community organizations and for-profits don't understand our missions or processes, we cannot be discouraged from working with these groups. Small museums have much to offer and should insist on a seat at the table with local chambers of commerce, museum associations, tourism alliances, and other local, regional, and affinity organizations. Seek partnerships where there is an intersection of purpose or potential for intersection.

Small museums sometimes feel that they lack the marketing budget, facility space, or staff to offer much to larger potential partners. Set these insecurities aside, and when the opportunity to work with another organization presents itself, say "YES." Or make the ask yourself.

After all, most museums aim to be an engaged part of their communities, and local partnerships equal community engagement. Get out there and meet people: attend a chamber of commerce mixer, go to a regional museum meeting, or get involved with your county convention and visitors bureau. All of these groups are looking for people to promote and enlighten others on what the local area or region has to offer.

Here's a homework assignment: attend a community event with the goal of talking to an unfamiliar person or business. You may be surprised to discover unexpected commonalities and partnership possibilities. (See the "How Can You Help?" sidebar for tips on what you can offer a range of local groups.)

Celebrate what makes your smaller institution unique and never apologize for what you lack. You must be your biggest and best cheerleader. Enthusiasm, especially enthusiasm targeted at the right partners, can be contagious.

And don't be discouraged if things don't click right away with another museum or business; keep trying. We tend to be a passionate group, and we know that our sites and stories can help our communities in many different ways, from education to economic development. But it can take time and persistence for others to see that too.

All photos by E. Michael DiPaolo

Lewes Historical Society summer day campers watch the total solar eclipse in August 2017. The Society partners with other nonprofits and educational entities to promote opportunities for youth in southern Delaware.

Capitalize on Your Opportunities

In 2006, we celebrated the 375th anniversary of the first settlement in what would become Delaware. Anniversaries, it just so happens, are great ways for small museums to bring attention to their missions and lead the news cycle. This was an opportunity for our museum that is still paying dividends to this day.

The Lewes Historical Society hosted a ceremonial session of the Delaware General Assembly, brought the Delaware Symphony Orchestra to Lewes for the first time in decades, and hosted a tall ships festival in our harbor. We worked with museums, public and private, across the state to host exhibitions and lectures about Delaware history and prehistory, and we partnered with local businesses to license branding rights to special foods and beer. Initially, our board was concerned about how much time these events would take, but in the end, board members saw the long-term possibilities inherent in a statewide celebration and the attendant media coverage.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

No matter how small your museum, it can be a big community resource. Following are some ways you can provide even greater value to your community.

Work with your convention and visitors bureau. Offer to host an event, lead a familiarization tour for travel writers, or give a presentation at an upcoming meeting to explore how your collections or your site's story fits into local branding efforts.

Send local newspapers or regional magazines information about your exhibitions and events. Local publications often need content, and you get the free publicity. Also, real estate offices often create their own publications to lure potential homebuyers. Provide them with some interesting local information to showcase the area's originality.

Think about where your collections can intersect with local organizations and businesses. Paintings can inspire a local writers' workshop or a photograph can drive a high school creative writing class. A historic menu or recipe book might influence a local restaurant.

The 375th anniversary events exposed the Lewes Historical Society to state policy makers, granting organizations, and businesses, resulting in a positive perception of our capacity and the value we could bring to partnerships. In addition, regional markets, including Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, DC, took notice.

The anniversary catapulted us from a local historical society focusing only on internal projects and narrowly focused programs to an organization that could be counted on to deliver on promises to others. We worked with a variety of partners from the nonprofit, for-profit, and government sectors and made sure everyone involved got a return on their investment.

The short-term accolades were wonderful, but our primary goal for the 375th celebration was building long-term relationships that would lead to an expanded donor base and increased funding options. We accomplished this by broadening our brand recognition.

We became a go-to source for media seeking background on stories, and not just history-related ones. We have contributed to stories about nonprofit issues, tourism, historic preservation, and southern Delaware and the Delmarva region in general. Our staff and board members have been invited to participate in panels, counted among the thought leaders in the nonprofit field in Delaware, and have made connections with funders, the media, and appointed and elected officials.

Our beer partner, Dogfish Head, has continued to be a consistent and valued partner following the 375th events. We have developed a great relationship with their leadership, which led to national magazine exposure for the Society and Dogfish Head using our sites for VIP beer dinners with cultural and political leaders. In 2015, the Society worked with Dogfish Head on a special exhibition commemorating the state's history of brewing and the company's 20th anniversary. Dogfish Head annually attracts tens of thousands of visitors to its facilities in Rehoboth and Milton, and the exhibition attracted a large number of those people. It showcased the company's original label art, the original brewing system, and other Dogfish memorabilia, as well as artifacts from late 19th- and early 20th-century Delaware breweries.

Not every partnership will work out so well. And that's okay. The initial effort is always worthwhile, and you will learn lessons to apply to future opportunities or perhaps find another way to work together.

Through a partnership with Mars Chocolate, a local Girl Scout troop learns about drinking chocolate that would have made its way to the docks of Philadelphia by way of Lewes in the 1700s.

Think Big Tent

As you look to form partnerships, have a big-tent mentality, and don't hesitate to reach out to large businesses, museums, or other organizations. Through a Lewes-area education coalition, the Society is working with the University of Delaware's Sea Grant

Program on educational programming that brings together STEM and history (e.g., historic storms) and funding opportunities for related exhibits.

The Lewes Historical Society has partnered with other Lewes-region entities like Beebe Healthcare, our local hospital, and the Delaware River & Bay Authority, operators of the Cape May—Lewes Ferry. Each organization recently celebrated key milestones, and the Society contributed to their planning committees, served as a venue for commemorative events, and offered items from our collections for their publications, advertising, and on-site exhibits.

Thanks to a partnership with a local business, the Lewes Base Ball Club games can attract up to 200 spectators. The team has been a great way to reach a younger audience.

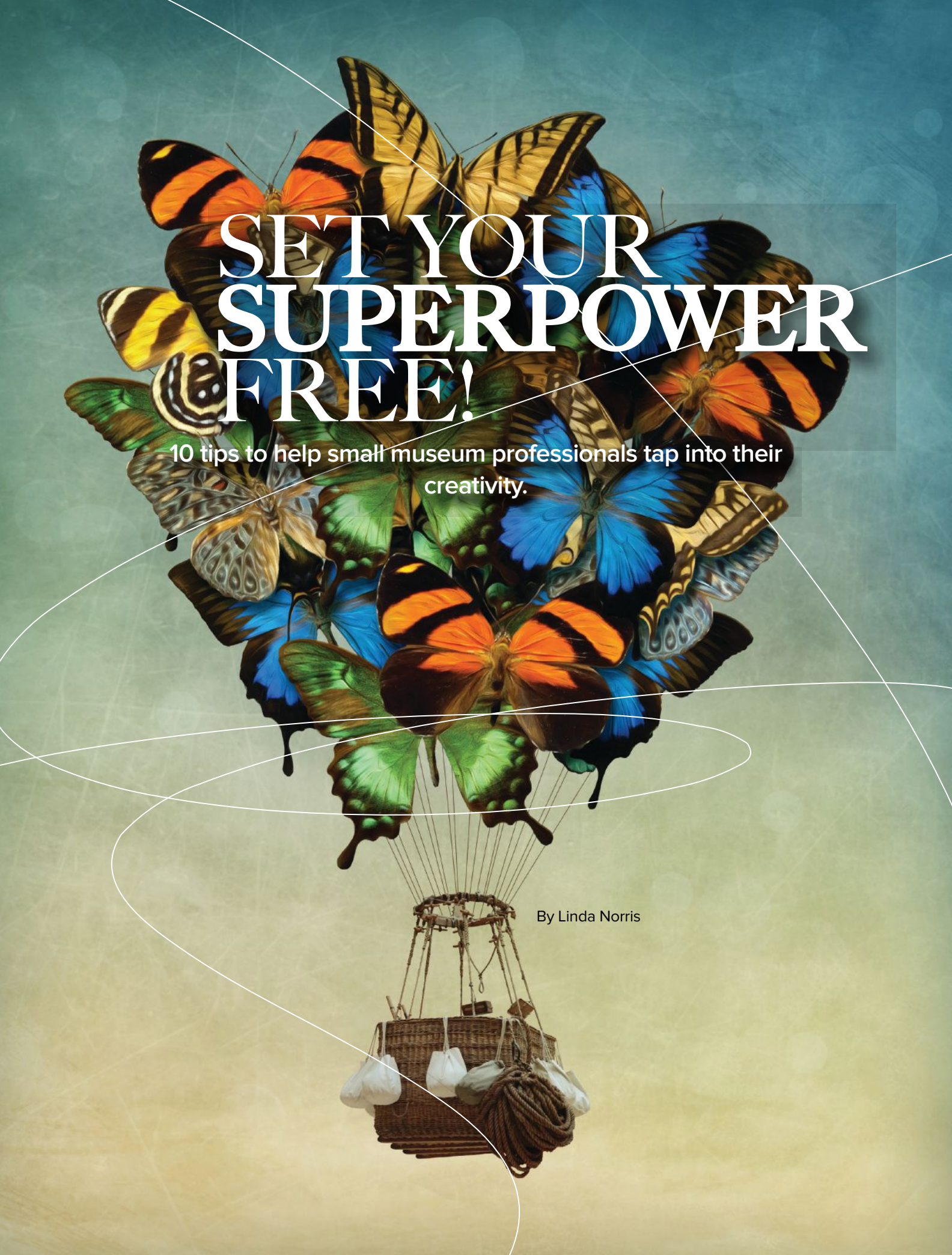
Or, like the Society's unlikely relationship with Dogfish Head, don't be afraid to develop relationships with nontraditional partners. Attempt to get out of discipline, department, and tax status silos, even if just informally.

Just as it is essential to set reasonable goals and agree on expectations at the outset of a partnership, maintaining the relationship is a critical part of the success equation. This is something that can be done both informally (having a conversation at a local coffee shop or meeting after work) or formally (making a presentation to key staff or giving a tour to senior leadership).

Since I started at the Lewes Historical Society, we've gone from one professional staff person (me) and a $69,000 annual budget to more than a dozen full- and part-time positions and a budget of $700,000. The relationships and contacts we've made helped us successfully complete a $3 million capital campaign, with major contributions coming from foundations, state resources, and private donors who believe in our mission. Additionally, we secured a $1 million matching gift (which we successfully matched) from an anonymous donor. Over the years, many donors have told me something along these lines: "We enjoy supporting the Society because you are out there—we see you in the paper and at events, working to make Lewes a better place with other organizations in the area. It means a lot to see an organization that is a big part of this state be a real part of the community."

Small museums can be a community's anchor, leader, economic engine, and trusted partner. When you are a good and enthusiastic steward of local collections and the incredible narratives they represent, what organization wouldn't want to work with you?

E. Michael DiPaolo is the executive director of The Lewes Historical Society in Lewes, Delaware. He is a past president of the Small Museum Association and recipient of the AAM Nancy Hanks Memorial Award for Professional Excellence in 2011.



SET YOUR SUPERPOWER FREE!

10 tips to help small museum professionals tap into their creativity.

By Linda Norris

You've probably heard some variation of the following: making changes at a big institution is like turning an ocean liner around, while changing course in a small organization is like tacking in a sailboat.

Small museum folks, you may not know it, but large museum professionals often envy you and your museum's ability to adapt and change quickly. Embrace this!

Successful small museums make the most of their adaptability by being creative. In fact, creativity is a small museum's superpower.

So what exactly is a creative museum? In our book *Creativity in Museum Practice*, Rainey Tisdale and I define the term: "Creative museums—and creative museum workers—produce new ideas and new ways of seeing things that add value either internally (to the staff and to operations behind the scenes) or externally (to a public audience)."

How do you do that? Here are 10 suggestions for exploiting your small museum's superpower.

1. Continuously reflect on your practice, perspective, and privilege.

Creative people—and creative organizations—are always looking outward to find the next great idea. But we also need to do the hard work of looking inward.

Reflecting on your practice might mean rethinking your hiring strategies, pushing your board of directors to include more diverse perspectives, or looking deeply at your collections to see whose story is not included. Creative organizations don't view this reflective work as a burden or an add-on to an already busy schedule. They embed it in everything they do.

2. Draw inspiration from everywhere—particularly from your own community.

Long ago, before Rainey and I knew each other and before we contemplated writing about creativity, we both attended a memorable AAM session chaired by Nina Simon, executive director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History. A diverse, funny group of colleagues shared places that inspired them to broaden their work. Public libraries, minor league teams, community gardens, and, as I remember, at least one guitar store, all provided inspiration.

In my own work, I've been lucky enough to travel to all kinds of places that provide inspiration. But far-flung travel isn't the only way to expand your horizons. Vary the places you go for coffee in the morning, walk in a neighborhood different than yours, or attend a different house of worship.

You can also broaden your thinking through the pages of a book. This year I've been working on Book Riot's Read Harder challenge. Designed to push your reading boundaries, the suggested tasks include reading a comic written and drawn by the same person, a book set in or about one of the five BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and a celebrity memoir.

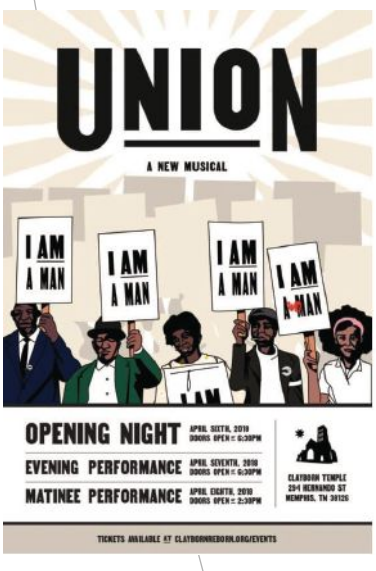
3. Understand and set creative constraints.

"Constraint" isn't always a positive word. But setting creative constraints can actually produce more creative work. You might brainstorm around the most engaging exhibitition you could produce for $250. Or you could set a time constraint: What can you accomplish in one hour to make your front desk more welcoming to visitors?

4. Organize your space and schedule to support your creative practice.

In small museums, staff offices are often tiny spaces, squeezed in storerooms or up in the attic. I know it's tough to make room for a creative space, but try. Have you saved old exhibition panels? Outdated brochures? An old fax machine? Get rid of them! Make

iStock.com/egal; iStock.com/Pingebat



Clayborn Temple in Memphis, Tennessee, produced and staged *Union: A New Musical* about the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike.

RESOURCES

Linda Norris and Rainey Tisdale, *Creativity in Museum Practice*, 2013

Linda Norris, *The Uncataloged Museum*, uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com

Scott Doorley and Scott Witthoft, *Make Space: How to Set the Stage for Creative Collaboration*, 2012

Book Riot's Read Harder 2018 Challenge, bookriot.com/2017/12/15/book-riots-2018-read-harder-challenge/

a comfortable space to share information and ideas. Put those markers and Post-its out for everyone to use when inspiration strikes.

You also need to organize your time for creative dreaming. At workshops, I often ask people to write a 30-day resolution on a postcard, and then I mail it to them at the 30-day mark. Resolutions have included bringing more fun to a work schedule that has become too hectic and cumbersome; seeing the site with new eyes; and visiting non-museum people for museum ideas.

5. Get together with local peers.

It's often lonely out there, but it doesn't have to be. Get together with your local museum colleagues to find out what they are up to. Your state museum association can help.

The Maryland Museums Association (MMA), for example, offers Brew & Review, a presentation at a member museum with beer (and wine) provided by MMA. "The goals were to provide a tangible benefit for our members, to help museum professionals learn from one another, and to do so on basically no budget," says Lindsey Baker, an MMA board member. "It grew into an opportunity for us to gather and be open about our different challenges and let the brainstorming for solutions be less formal and more open to a variety of thoughts than a formal assessment program such as MAP or StEPs would have produced."

6. Be open to new ideas with "plussing."

Everyone has been in a work meeting where someone has an idea and the next person says, "But…we've always done it this way." "But…we tried that once and it didn't work." "But…our members will hate it." This almost immediately shuts down the flow of ideas.

Set a meeting ground rule that no one can use any of the phrases above. Instead, try a simple technique called "plussing," or, from the world of improv comedy, "yes, and…" When an idea is floated, the goal of subsequent comments is to "plus" that idea by adding value, deepening the thought, or sharing a broader perspective.

7. Try brainwriting to get the most from all staff members.

The museum field, like any other workplace, has both introverts and extroverts. Extroverts like me love a brainstorming meeting: we love to share our ideas out loud. But not everyone (ahem, introverts) operates that way, and an effective, creative workplace is one where everyone's ideas are valued.

Try brainwriting; it's simple. A task (say, how to make exhibits more engaging for families) is presented. In small groups, each person writes down, in silence, all the ideas he or she has. After a few minutes, that paper is passed to the next person, who plusses (see above) those ideas. I've been surprised at how often a shy person comes up to me at the end of a workshop and says, "I love that brainwriting! I hate talking in groups."

8. Don't be afraid to experiment—and experiment again.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Connecticut, had a great social-justice mission and did compelling programming. However, when you visited Stowe's house, the centerpiece of the visitor experience was a house tour, like so many other house tours out there.

The education/interpretation team, led by Shannon Burke and supported by Executive Director Katherine Kane, embarked on a three-year process to redesign the visitor experience. That process included many, many meetings, as you might expect, but it also included ongoing experimentation with every aspect of

Poster courtesy of Clayborn Reborn

the visitor experience. Will visitors talk to each other? Will they read out loud? What story fits where in the narrative of the house? Do people feel uncomfortable—and is that good or bad?

How did it end up? Here's one review on Trip Advisor: "The message of fearlessness, a call to action, and equality were told through Harriet, but the connections to 2018 were obvious."

9. Directors, be creative leaders!

Creative leaders find ways to encourage the creative development of all staff while at the same time building staff cohesiveness. Rod Cofield, executive director of Historic London Town & Gardens in Maryland, plans professional development days throughout the year. These days have included visits to other museums; experiential learning trips, such as a horse day (more below) and sailing on a wooden tall ship; and simply staying onsite to talk through how the past few weeks or months have gone. "These days have really helped the group here decompress when needed and have injected more fun into our workspace," Cofield says.

About that horse day: during most of London Town's colonial and 19th-century history, horses were an everyday fact of life. "So, we took advantage of some connections to give our staff a horse day to learn more about this," Cofield says. "They examined horse-related artifacts, had an hour-long discussion with a horse vet, got practical experience with brushing down horses and similar care, and then we ended with a trail ride."

Creative leaders also look everywhere in the museum to both find inspiration and share a creative message. The staff at the Matilda Joslyn Gage Home in upstate New York created an equal pay table. A sign notes that all items on the table are $1.00 for men and $0.77 for women, reflecting the wage gap.

10. Build community creativity.

Small museums can play vital roles in building the creative, problem-solving capacity of their communities. There is a long tradition of non-Shakers gaining inspiration from Shaker history, landscapes, and material culture. Today, the Shaker Heritage Society in Albany, New York, draws on that tradition for its Day of Inspiration. At the event, participants can join a guided writing workshop in which they seek inspiration from the grounds, nature, and architecture.

Clayborn Temple in Memphis, Tennessee, an iconic site of the Civil Rights Movement, combines its history of activism with the creative and social justice talents of its community. It has produced and staged *Union: A New Musical* about the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike. The performances this year included a community conversation that brought young people, activists, artists, influencers, and civic leaders together around the ongoing work of democracy and activist training workshops.

"The solutions for communities live in those communities already," says Clayborn Temple Executive Director Anasa Troutman. Creative small museums can help surface these solutions.

There's one thing that all these creative efforts have in common: they are free or almost free. And that means that every small museum can try them out. Whatever you do, don't waste your superpower!

Linda Norris is the global networks program director for the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and was previously an independent museum professional focusing on creativity and community engagement. She is the co-author of *Creativity in Museum Practice* with Rainey Tisdale, with whom she has a continuing creative partnership that sparked much of this article.

The equal pay sales table at the Matilda Joslyn Gage Home drives home the reality of the wage gap.

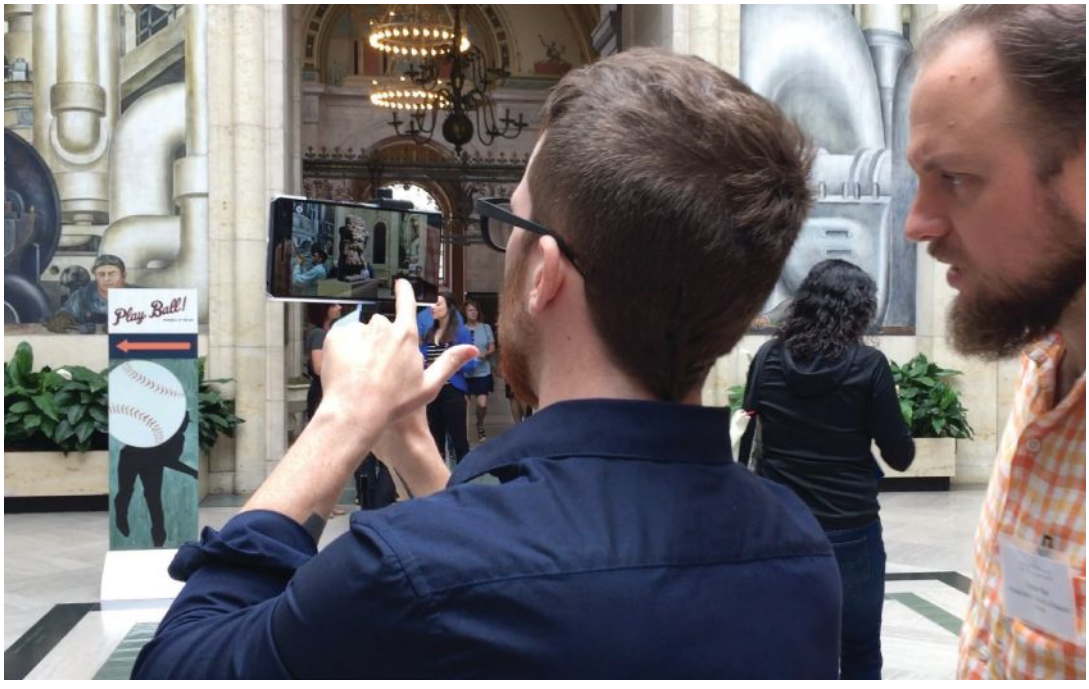
Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation

AAM Convening on Leveraging Immersive Experiences in Museums

Some say it's possible to travel the world in an afternoon without ever leaving the galleries of your favorite museum. Certainly, many of us have experienced losing ourselves amid alluring objects and stories that transport us to other places and times. With the maturation of digital technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), museums are on the cusp of creating increasingly compelling virtual experiences that extend the reach and possibilities of what a museum might become. Simultaneously, visitors are increasingly concerned about the dangers of privileging digitally mediated experiences over "real time" spent with friends and family.

On September 6–7, 2018, museum colleagues, technologists, and scholars convened at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to discuss immersive experiences and their future applications in museums. Vince Kadlubek and Golda Blaise shared their experiences as co-founders of Meow Wolf, a Santa Fe artists collective that creates compelling immersive installations. Maureen Towey offered insight on her experience launching the *New York Times*' Daily 360. Attendees got "hands-on" with AR by using DIA's Lumin, an augmented reality tour that presents the museum's collection in a new and engaging way. Elizabeth Merritt, vice president for strategic foresight at AAM and founding director of the Center for the Future of Museums, facilitated sessions that challenged attendees to design future scenarios related to AR and VR and to think critically about the implications that emanate from emerging changes within the field.

This event was funded by the Knight Foundation with additional support from GuidiGO. **To learn more about the event and to watch recordings of the keynote speakers, visit aam-us.org/immersion-in-museums-ar-vr-or-just-plain-r.**



Participants at "Immersion in Museums: AR, VR, or Just Plain R?" explore exhibits at the Detroit Institute of Art using the museum's augmented reality device, Lumin.

Elizabeth Merritt

American Alliance of Museums

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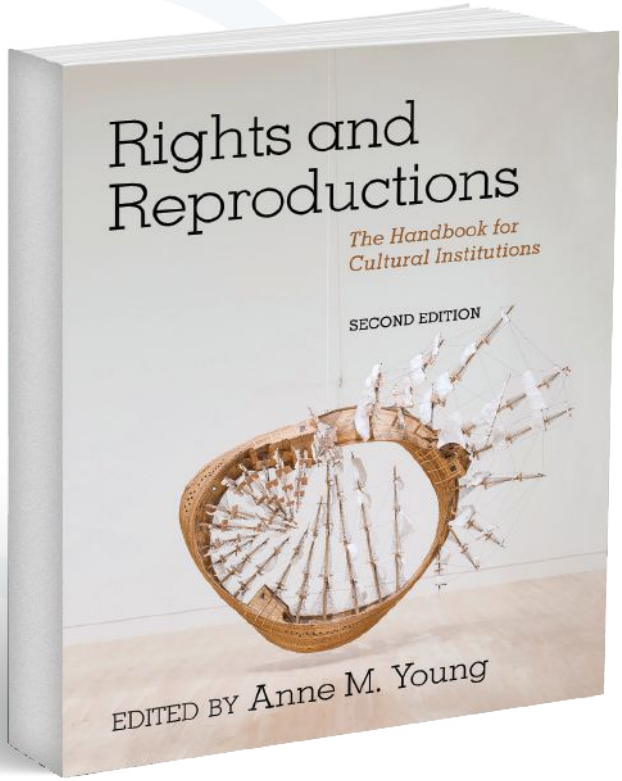

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Anne M. Young heads the rights and reproductions department at the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.

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Save the Date for Museums Advocacy Day 2019!

Museums Advocacy Day 2019 will be in Washington, DC, on February 25–26. This annual field-wide event is a unique opportunity to learn about current and emerging legislative issues, the impact of the midterm election results on shaping the legislative agenda for museums, and tools and strategies to hone your advocacy skills. The program also includes scheduled visits with federal legislators and their staff. Unite with others from the museum field as one voice to reaffirm our value, collective contributions, and aspirations. Registration

From left: California advocates Lisa Eriksen, principal, Lisa Eriksen Consulting, and Kelly McKinley, deputy director, Oakland Museum of California and AAM Board member, with Representative Barbara Lee (CA).

Risdon Photograph /www.risdonfoto.com

opens in mid-November. **Learn more at aam-us.org/programs/museums-advocacy-day.**

AAM Joins Forces to Address Creative Aging

Aroha Philanthropies, the American Alliance of Museums, and Lifetime Arts have selected 20 museums to participate in a new initiative called *Seeding Vitality Arts in Museums*. Aroha Philanthropies, which will manage the initiative, is providing more than $1 million in funding to enable these museums to develop and implement high-quality, intensive arts learning opportunities for older adults.

All three organizations feel an urgent need to change the narrative about what it means to grow old in America, combat ageism, and promote a healthy change in societal attitudes toward aging as growth and in older adults as contributors. **Find the list of participating organizations at aam-us.org.**

Task Force to Explore Education-Related Core Document

A recently formed 16-member EdCom-led task force will assess whether there is field-wide agreement in support of a core document, applicable to all museums, that clearly states their educational philosophies and principles and/or guides their decisions about the development and delivery of their educational role. If so, the task force will identify the common elements to be included in a core document. If there is not consensus, the task force will suggest other resources in education to help museums. To inform their decisions, the task force will conduct a field-wide survey, review existing relevant literature, and collect sample education-related policies to identify the types of documents, other guidance, and terminology currently in use. The composition of the task force includes perspectives from museums of all types and sizes and a diversity

of museum professionals. The task force will conclude its work in the spring of 2020.

Apply to Be an Excellence Peer Reviewer

Are you someone who is:

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- A critical thinker and strong writer?

If so, consider applying to be an AAM peer reviewer for Accreditation and/or the Museum Assessment Program (MAP). It's a great opportunity whether you are a mid-career professional, have been in the field for many years, or have recently retired. Choose the program that best fits your style: MAP reviewers offer consultative feedback and recommendations to help museums improve, and Accreditation reviewers observe and analyze the museum's operations in practice against standards to inform the Accreditation Commission's decision-making.

Peer review is a wonderful professional development opportunity. With each site visit, you'll interact with fellow professionals and learn how another museum addresses its challenges and community, and the museum benefits from your experience and expertise. Take it from seasoned reviewer Norman Burns, president and CEO of Conner Prairie: "I get as much out of being a reviewer as the site gets out of me. It sharpens me mentally for my own organization, and I am reminded of the creativity and passion that is in our field." **Learn more at aam-us.org/programs/peer-review.**

Our Shared Responsibility

Joanne Jones-Rizzi began working at the Boston Children's Museum in 1985, focusing on issues of access and equity. In 2004, she left Boston to work on the "RACE: Are We So Different?" exhibition at the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM). Jones-Rizzi—the recipient of AAM's 2018 Award for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) for individuals—took some time to reflect on her accomplishments over the decades and offer advice for others interested in DEAI work. The full conversation is available at bit.ly/JoanneRizzi.

How did you get involved in DEAI work?

I co-led a project in Boston with Aylette Jenness in the late '80s and early '90s that focused on what we called at that time "multiculturalizing" the museum. This was an early iteration of my current work in which we examined all aspects of the Children's Museum from a multicultural perspective that assessed the representation of people of color, from museum board to museum audiences, and worked to create a culture of equity and inclusion in all facets of the museum. This work informed, and then became tangible with, the opening of a pivotal exhibition called "The Kids Bridge," which focused on helping young children explore and appreciate their own cultural identity, celebrate diversity, recognize racism, and learn to work against it.

What project at SSM has best advanced this work?

The opening of the "RACE: Are We So Different?" exhibition at SMM in 2007 significantly advanced DEAI work internally and externally. A project of the American Anthropological Association, developed by SMM, the RACE exhibition represents the work, perseverance, and talent of many individuals. Following a national tour to more than 50 museums, we were able to bring the RACE exhibition back to SMM in 2015. Having the exhibition on-site again allowed us to build on it for our internal equity work.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities with DEAI work in museums?

The challenges with this work are the same challenges associated with any kind of work that is about change. Some museums relegate DEAI work to one department. In order to make real change, it's critical that museums view this work as core to their mission and their strategic plan. This work is not only the work of people of color, LGBTQ people, or people of other under represented groups; it is the work of everyone in an institution. Understanding larger systems of oppression, white supremacy culture, and how these factor into our collective experience is hard work. The opportunities of DEAI are unlimited, and diversity enriches our lives. This work is critical to our survival.

What advice would you give to others doing, or aspiring to do, this work?

This work is all-consuming and can be daunting, frustrating, anger-inducing, and inspiring. It's important to remember to find ways for self-care. As a black woman working in a primarily white institution, self-care is vital.

This is an exciting time in our field; there are incredible people, dynamic projects, and social actions. Everyone has their own path—be true to your own ideals, be vulnerable or open to new ideas, and be courageous and disrupt.

What do you hope the museum of the future will look like?

In museums of the future as I imagine them, positions like mine will not be necessary. Equity, diversity, access, and inclusion will not be the work of people of color or LGBTQ people; it will be core to the values and actions of all institutions. White people will view this work as their work and will not be shut down by past behaviors and their own fragility.

New Jobs

Emily Barrios, *Marketing and Rental Coordinator,* Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT

Ulrich Birkmaier, *Senior Conservator of Paintings,* J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Mary Burch, *Chief Development Officer,* San Antonio Museum of Art, TX

Jason T. Busch, *Director,* American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

Elizabeth Chilton, *Executive Director,* Paint Creek Center for the Arts, Rochester, MI

Jodi DeBruyne, *Director of Collections and Research,* Abbe Museum, Bar Harbor, ME

Heather Ecker, *Marguerite S. Hoffman and Thomas W. Lentz Curator of Islamic and Medieval Art,* Dallas Museum of Art, TX

Axel Estable, *Curator of Curiosity and Director of Education,* Thanksgiving Point Institute, Lehi, UT

Ndubuisi Ezeluomba, *Françoise Billion Richardson Curator of African Art,* New Orleans Museum of Art, LA

Jessica Lynn Fowler, *Development Stewardship Coordinator,* Denver Art Museum, CO

Marcus A. Harshaw, *Vice President of Education and Facilities,* Kaleideum, Winston-Salem, NC

Sarah Bailey Hogarty, *Director of Marketing and Communications,* The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA

Beth Huffer, *Director, Archives and Research Center,* Chevy Chase Historical Society, MD

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Casey Moore, *Collections Specialist,* The Carolinas Aviation Museum, Charlotte, NC

Kelli Morgan, *Associate Curator of American Art,* Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, IN

Heather Pressman, *Director of Learning and Engagement,* Molly Brown House Museum, Denver, CO

Marissa Reyes, *Director of Learning and Public Programs,* Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

Kailen Rogers, *Exhibit Content and Experience Developer,* MIT Museum, Cambridge, MA

Anna Stein, *Assistant Curator of Works on Paper,* Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, IN

Greg Stevens, *Director, Master of Arts in Museum Professions Program; Director, Institute for Museum Ethics,* Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

Lori Ann M. Terjesen, *Director of Education*, National Women's History Museum, Alexandria, VA

Cyndi Tosla, *Director of Development*, Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT

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Kudos

The Jewish Museum has received a major gift from The Barnett and Annalee Newman Foundation that includes more than 70 artworks and $10 million. The funds will go toward the endowment of a curatorial position and the care and exhibition of the institution's collection. The gifted works include more than 30 pieces from the couple's collection, including works by Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Claes Oldenburg, as well as more than 40 pieces by winners of the foundation's Barnett and Annalee Newman Award, such as Julie Mehretu, Mark Bradford, and Sarah Sze.

The American Fisheries Society (AFS) selected **Larry Page**, curator of fishes at the Florida Museum of Natural History, as a member of its fourth class of AFS fellows. Page, who has been a Florida Museum curator since 2002, has more than 46 years of professional experience in the field of ichthyology. He also is the director of iDigBio, a National Science Foundation–funded project to digitize the nation's biodiversity specimens.

Retired

Joyce Ice, founding director of the Art Museum of West Virginia University, retired in July. She oversaw the planning and programming of the museum, which opened in 2015. Previously, she was director and assistant director at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Over her career, she served on the ICOM-US National Committee and numerous AAM accreditation visiting committees. In 2015, she was recognized by the West Virginia Art Education Association for her service.

Gary Walrath retired from Rocky Mount Historical Association in Piney Flats, Tennessee, after 13 years, and 46 years in the museum community. A longtime professional member of AAM and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), he served as an AAM accreditation and a Museum Assessment Program peer reviewer, was a member of the Small Museums Accreditation Academy, and chaired the AASLH Mentoring Committee.

In Memoriam

Lori Yarrish, the director of the Anacostia Community Museum (ACM), passed away on August 6, 2018. Yarrish became director of the museum in December 2017, after serving as acting director since June 2016, and led efforts to renew and revitalize the ACM. Previously, Yarrish was the deputy director of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and was state administrator of collections and exhibitions for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Banneker-Douglass Museum.

Marie Clogher Malaro passed away on July 16, 2018. During her career, she was legal counsel for the Smithsonian Institution and later the director of the graduate program in museum studies at The George Washington University. Her books include *Museum Governance: Mission, Ethics, Policy* (1994) and *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections (*3rd edition, 2012). In retirement, she devoted much of her time to volunteer work, providing legal services to numerous organizations, including the Queen Ann County Historical Society, the Museum of Eastern Shore Life, and CASA.

FROM OUR BLOG

Read more about how small museums are using creativity to expand their resources on the AAM blog at **bit.ly/smallgobig**.

For another thought-provoking read on how AAM pivoted when it came to small museums, check out Allison Titman's post "What Small Museums Need (& Don't)" on the AAM blog at **bit.ly/whatsmallmuseumsneed**.

Read how one museum used the Museum Assessment Program to benefit its community engagement on the AAM blog at **bit.ly/AAFMMAPexperience**.

Advertiser Guide

An Indelible Imprint

The Smithsonian Latino Center is the recipient of AAM's 2018 Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) award for institutions. Eduardo Díaz, director of the Latino Center, offers insight on the organization's work, accomplishments, and vision. The full conversation is available at bit.ly/EduardoDiaz.

How has the Latino Center advanced the work of the Smithsonian Institution?

Since its creation in 1997, the Latino Center has nurtured and supported research, exhibitions, collections, public and educational programs and products, digital outreach, publications, and leadership and professional development programs. For more than 20 years, the Latino Center has organized exhibitions and initiated and managed its own leadership and professional development programs. These efforts have helped strengthen lasting pan-institutional Latino representation and presence at the Smithsonian.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities in doing this work?

The fractured nature of our current political climate and discourse certainly presents its challenges. Anti-immigration rhetoric becomes another front on which we have to fight, with information like the often-overlooked fact that more than two-thirds of the Latino population was born or naturalized here. Unfortunately, this environment does make it difficult to produce and promote programs about the Latino experience. Despite this obstacle, we will continue to ensure that we are *presente*.

The greatest opportunity we have is to tell stories about the many ways our diverse Latino communities have helped build this country and shape its national culture. There are many Latino stories that have been under-researched and remain untold. There are many of our artists who are still unknown. There are many of our scientists who have yet to be recognized for their contributions. Latino history is foundationally American history—period. Latino art is fully rooted in the canon of American art. At the Smithsonian and at other museums, we have great opportunities to center the Latino experience within the American experience.

What advice would you give to others doing, or aspiring to do, this work?

From a museum perspective, I would start by grounding one's individual practice in what it means to work as essentially custodians of our cultural and scientific patrimonies. From there, it is critically important to commit oneself to representing the full measure of the American experience and then secure the necessary resources to fully and accurately accomplish this goal. One must be absolutely prepared to be transparent, accountable, and open to ongoing oversight.

What do you hope the museum of the future will look like?

I believe that the museum of the future must be wholly inclusive of the vast diversity of experiences and contributions of all American communities. Research, exhibitions, collections, public and educational programs, web-based content, and publications must reflect these experiences and contributions. However, we must go beyond diversity and inclusion to also ensure equity; that is, the development and allocation of financial and human resources necessary to support, in our case, Latino initiatives.

I have become increasingly interested in the "A" in DEAI. I believe museums lag significantly in effectively serving the needs and interests of constituents with physical, sensory, and/or cognitive differences. While there have been significant technological advancements, and the development of exciting and creative new approaches, it seems that many institutions are satisfied with meeting basic ADA standards. We must do better than that and align ourselves with, and abide by, universal design standards that will help us effectively deliver content that these constituents can grasp and appreciate.

do I share the story

of when we knew peace

before we learned to fight

in paperwork language?

or do I sing a song

bigger than reality TV

2016 @AKU_MATU
Allison Akootchook Warden

The image and poem appear in *Unsettled*, published by the Nevada Museum of Art and winner of The Francis Smyth-Ravenel Prize for Excellence in publication design in the 2018 AAM Publications Design Competition. For a list of all the winners, visit **bit.ly/2018AAMpubcomp.**

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