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## EdCom Newsletter: April 2014

### Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

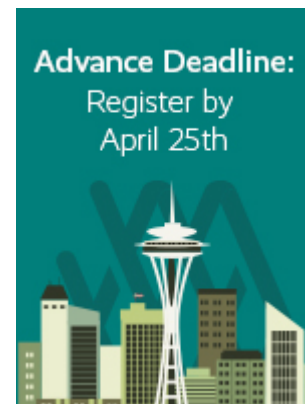
Last year, EdCom conducted a survey to members to gather information about programs that served members of the military, enhanced accessibility, trained teachers, targeted homeschoolers, taught literacy or STEM standards, broadened community outreach, or were otherwise innovative or unusual. The fact that so many museums large and small and of all different disciplines were offering these programs didn't surprise me. What did, however, was the range and breadth of what was provided.

One favorite that caught my attention is "Mega Bad Movie Night" at the Academy of Natural Sciences at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Inspired in part by *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, moviegoers watched a hokey sci-fi film (accompanied by snacks and adult beverages) while the movie's many scientific absurdities were debunked by their staff of experts. Visitors were then welcome to enjoy the galleries after normal museum hours. When asked to identify the single best indicator of the program's success, museum staff said that they received a call from a couple who lived together but were not married who wanted to purchase a family membership after attending the program. So, this program might not be as, um, "cerebrally inclined" as teacher trainings or accessibility programs, but this instance certainly reveals the changing manner in which people want to engage with museums as well hints to the ways we need to adapt institutionally to respond to the changing dynamic of families.

Within the past few weeks, I have spoken with journalists from two major national media sources that were covering museum education topics. The first was reporting on this "new" phenomenon she noticed of museums recording lectures and archiving them online. The second covered a teacher training program and wanting to know if this was a new trend. I felt like I was shattering both of their perceptions when I told them that museums have been doing this kind of work for decades now. And it struck me—we really don't do a great job of letting the world know what we offer. I'm not certain we do a good job of sharing what we do amongst colleagues.

We have to start doing a better job of this. That is one reason why EdCom is focusing its efforts on identifying and sharing "best and next" practices in the field. But, we need your help! We invite you to [share your stories](#) with us. [Nominate a colleague](#)—or yourself for that matter—for an EdCom award. [Register](#) for the 2014 AAM Annual Meeting in Seattle. [Submit an idea](#) for a conference session or recommend a speaker for our luncheon at the AAM Annual Meeting in Atlanta next year. Our plan is to both take in information from

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the field and then share it back out with everyone. You can always reach me with ideas by emailing me at [chair@edcom.org](mailto:chair@edcom.org).

I look forward to seeing you in Seattle this May!



Nathan Richie  
Chair, EdCom  
Director, Golden History Museums  
Golden, Colorado

## Register Today for EdCom Events at the AAM Annual Meeting!

Haven't yet registered for the 2014 Annual Meeting in Seattle? The deadline for [advance registration](#) is **April 25**, so don't delay! April 25 is also the last day to [purchase tickets](#) for two terrific opportunities to connect with your colleagues in EdCom.

### Sunday, May 18

What does a 'germnasium' with a giant sneeze wall, a saltwater tide pool, and musical stairs have to do with EdCom's annual reception? Join us at the [Pacific Science Center](#) to find out! Enjoy some cocktails, [hors d' oeuvres](#) and interactive exhibits with us before heading over to the Alliance Opening Party located just a few blocks away at the [EMP Museum](#).



### Tuesday, May 20

The ever-popular EdCom luncheon will feature author, educator and civic entrepreneur, Eric Liu. As the founder and CEO of Citizen University, he promotes and teaches the art of great citizenship through a portfolio of national programs.



According to Eric, this is a time for citizen problem-solving, and we as a society need to reimagine what we can do to make a unum out of the pluribus. Each of our institutions is focused on learning outcomes that are tied to very specific disciplines. But is there a broader set of educational objectives that we share? What role can and should museums play in fostering the sort of civic learning that underpins widespread participation in public life. How can institutions ranging from art, history and science museums to zoos and aquariums contribute to a society wherein all citizens are empowered to tackle the challenges facing our communities? And what lessons can we learn from like-minded professionals working in seemingly dissimilar fields? We invite you to join the conversation!

## Opportunities Around the Country

### XSci Conference

XSci is holding an experiential STEM conference in Denver from July 29–Aug. 1. There will be three tracks, including one for informal educators. Educators will get "first person experiences in STEM learning that are designed to be [...] relevant and operate on intellectual, physical, and emotional levels."

For more information, visit [www.XperienceSTEM.com](http://www.XperienceSTEM.com). AAM members receive a 10% discount off registration. Please use this link to register: <https://xperiencestem.eventbrite.com/?discount=AAM>.

### Envisioning the Future of Museums in Puget Sound

On Thursday, April 24 at the Seattle Art Museum, The Museum Educators of Puget Sound and the National Association for Interpretation, Region 10, are co-organizing a panel discussion, "Envisioning the Future of Museums in Puget Sound." This public event is free to attend and open to all. If you're in the area and interested in coming, you can find more info on the [event Facebook page](#) or by e-mailing [info@psmuseums.org](mailto:info@psmuseums.org). Please also share this with any friends, family or colleagues in the area that might be interested!

## Meet the Board

### Sarah Jesse, EdCom Chair Elect

#### Why are you involved in EdCom?

I think AAM and EdCom are important to the field, and I want to be a part of the effort. Mostly though, it's fun. I like thinking about museums and getting to know my colleagues across the nation.

#### What's your day job?

I'm the Associate Vice President of Education at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

#### What is the future of museum education, in 10 words or fewer?

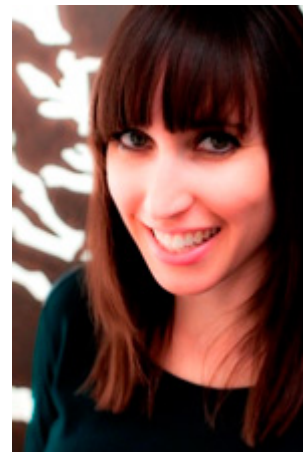
Museums will achieve great reputations from programming, not just collections.

#### What advice do you have for new museum education professionals?

Continually develop expertise in education, but look outside of that silo too. Simultaneously work on gaining a broader perspective about museums and your institution. Read your museum's strategic plan, become friends with staff from other departments, keep up on the literature surrounding field-wide issues, etc. Having a bigger picture will keep your thinking ambitious and your work relevant.

#### What is one fun fact about yourself?

I have a twin sister.



### Leah Fox, Membership Committee Chair

#### Why are you involved in EdCom?

I serve on the EdCom board to exchange ideas with colleagues about ways museums can fulfill their missions and address shared opportunities and challenges that will move the field forward. Museums' service is evolving as we strive to remain relevant to changes in society and develop deeper relationships with our communities.

#### What's your day job?

Director of Interpretation and Audience Engagement at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire.



#### What is the future of museum education, in 10 words or fewer?

Be essential. Be relevant to tomorrow.

#### What advice do you have for new museum education professionals?

Emerging professionals will need to talk with people and organizations in their communities about their real needs and think creatively about how museums can be part of the solution.

**What is one fun fact about yourself?**

I can often be found building imaginary structures in Legos with my awesome five-year-old daughter.

**Newly Elected**

The following Board positions have been voted in and will be assuming their roles at the conclusion of the upcoming Annual Meeting:

**Secretary:** Kelly McKinley, director of the OMCA Lab, Oakland Museum of California

**Chair-elect for the Annual Conference Committee:** Jason Porter, assistant director of education, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles

**Chair-elect for the Communication Committee:** Timothy Rhue II, explainers program manager, Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C.

**Chair-elect for the Membership Committee:** Niki Stewart, director of education and exhibitions, Crystal Bridges Museum, Bentonville, Arkansas

**Continuing On**

The following will be transitioning from Chair-Elect to Chair:

**Sarah Jesse**, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Executive Board Chair); **Nathan Richie**, Golden History Museum (Immediate Past Chair); **George E. Buss, Jr.**, Minnetrista (Board Development Committee Chair); **Betsy Bowers**, Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (Museum Education Issues Committee Chair); **Anthony Pennay**, Walter and Leonore Annenberg Presidential Learning Center, The Ronald Reagan Foundation (Professional Development Committee Chair)

We are happy to welcome back the current chairs on these committees:

**Courtney Brouwer**, McCormick Foundation (Annual Conference Committee Chair), **Elissa Frankle**, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Communications Committee Chair) and **Leah Fox**, Currier Museum of Art (Membership Committee Chair).

**Outgoing Chairs and National Associates**

And we want to extend a giant thank you to the following Chairs and National Associates, who are completing their term of service in 2014, for all the work they accomplished for EdCom:

**Immediate Past Chair:** Jim Hakala, University of Colorado Museum, Boulder

**Secretary:** Jane Burrell, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

**Board Development Committee Chair:** Judith Koke, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

**Museum Education Issues Committee Chair:** James Stein, Philadelphia Museum of Art

**Professional Development Committee Chair:** Hassan Najjar, Museum Center at Five Points

**National Associates**

- Lynda Kennedy, EdandArts
- Carol Stapp, The George Washington University Museum Education Program
- Marcella Wells, Wells Resources, Inc.
- Kris Wetterlund, Sandbox Studios

Welcome aboard to our new board members and thank you again to our outgoing Chairs! The new Board will be updated on the [EdCom website](#) after they assume their roles at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting in Seattle.

## Calling You!

As your bimonthly newsletter, we want to hear from you! Want to highlight events at your museum or in your community? Is there a burning issue you want to bring to the attention of your colleagues? Or do you have some thoughts to share on museums and museum education? Let us know! E-mail your opinion pieces to [edcomweb@gmail.com](mailto:edcomweb@gmail.com) for inclusion in the newsletter, and we'll share your ideas with the museum education community.

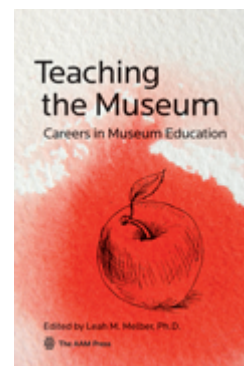
March/April issue  
of Museum is  
**now available**  
online for  
Alliance  
members



New from  
The AAM Press

## Teaching the Museum: Careers in Museum Education

Edited by Leah M.  
Melber, Ph.D.



## Calendar

- April 11**      [Publications Competition](#) submission deadline
- April 17**      [TrendsWatch 2014](#)  
Online Town Hall
- April 25**      Annual Meeting [Advance Registration](#) deadline
- April 25**      Annual Meeting [Housing](#) deadline
- April 25**      Annual Meeting [Event Tickets](#) deadline
- May 1**         [Recruiting, Selecting and Placing Museum Volunteers](#)  
Live webinar



American Alliance of Museums  
2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005, Arlington, VA 22202  
202-289-1818  
[www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org)

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