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Alliance of
Museums

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**EdCom Newsletter:
August 2014**

Chair's Corner

Dear Colleagues,

Imagine your boss asking you to hold off on implementing that next big project in order to have time to reflect and plan. That was precisely the mandate from Nanette Maciejunes, director of the Columbus Museum of Art (CMA), in the institution's pursuit to become a place people use versus merely visit. It sounds obvious that a fundamental gut check like that would require carving out intellectual space to think it all through. But we insiders recognize just how radical Maciejunes' directive really was, given the pressures museums feel to churn out more offerings and serve more people. CMA offers an instructive example of how audiences can reap the benefits of strong leadership, clarity of purpose, a lucid narrative uniting the work of an organization, and, yes, time for staff to think! CMA's transformation is documented in the latest issue of the *Journal of Museum Education*, and we're delighted to collaborate with the Museum Education Roundtable to host a virtual chat on this topic. See below for details and join us for this interesting conversation!



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Let's Talk About It

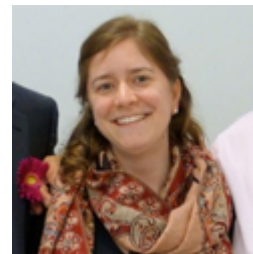
Connect with colleagues and discuss what's going on in the field! Join EdCom for a virtual chat via Google Hangout on Oct. 8 at 2 p.m. (ET) to reflect together on the article "[Intentionality and the 21st Century Museum](#)" hot off the press from the July issue of the [Journal of Museum Education](#). This reading provides opportunities for museums to consider relevance, creativity, collaboration, risk-taking and community. Guest editors from the Columbus Museum of Art and colleagues from the [Museum Education Roundtable](#) will engage in a lively conversation designed to encourage EdCom members to think "outside of the box," try new things and grow as professionals. Participation is free to EdCom members. Watch the AAM website for additional details.

What Are You Reading?

Each month we ask luminaries in the field what's on their nightstand. This newsletter features Stephanie Arduini, director of education at The American Civil War Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement, by Anne Bergeron and Beth Tuttle

I recently took a new position at The American Civil War Museum, which was formed in the last year by consolidating two existing institutions. We're in the middle of creating a new unified organization and defining our end impact. These case studies have provided helpful tools for reflection on our own practice, inspiration for the possible and demonstration of what's possible in the field.



Excellence in Practice: Museum Education Principles and Standards (developed by EdCom), **“Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums”** (by AAM), and selections from **“The Museum Experience Revisited”** (by John Falk and Lynn Dierking)

As part of our new institution, I'm also leading the consolidation of all of our education staff into one unified department. These documents are just the first of many in helping to provide a common foundation for us as a staff team as we begin to plan our projects going forward. Our educators come from such varied backgrounds and levels of experience in museum work as a field, and this is helping to build a shared understanding of standards, best practices, research and reflective practice.

“Know Your Own Bone” blog (by Colleen Dilenschneider) and **“Dispatches from the Future of Museums”** (from AAM's Center for the Future of Museums)

Both provide excellent data-based glimpses into trends and other changes that are or could shape the future of our work. Though Colleen's work is primarily focused on marketing, it still is useful to educators to think about changing trends of how our visitors absorb information. I love how the CFM's work is varied and provides glimpses to the world beyond museums. I've really enjoyed CFM's report **“Building the Future of Education: Museums and the Learning Ecosystem”** if you haven't yet.

Marianna Adams' **“Gardner Museum Residency Summer 2014”** blog

Marianna has been posting some really thoughtful reflections about her summer fellowship at the Gardner Museum. While she's taking the time to reintroduce herself to visitors and her practice, I've been reflecting on my own work as we start to plan and prioritize experiences in our new museum. Her work has been refreshing as it balances theory and questions with practical implications.

“Museums Change Lives” by the Museums Association

I believe strongly in the power of museums to create change in their visitors and communities. After seeing a great session at the 2014 Annual Meeting that referenced this report, I was excited to explore this publication that UK museums are using as strategic tool for their museums. It's also nice to see our field saying that not only is this social action by museums possible, but also it's crucial.

Awards of Excellence Spotlight

EdCom has recognized outstanding contributions to museum education since 1983. Over the next four newsletters we will highlight the accomplishments of this year's award winners. If you know a person, program or resource worthy of recognition, keep them in mind for our next call for nominations this winter.

The EdCom Award for Excellence in Practice recognizes the contributions of an exemplary museum educator to the field. 2014 winner **Leah Melber**, senior director of the Hurvis Center for Learning Innovation and Collaboration at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, sets the bar for what it means to be an outstanding museum educator in terms of research, writing, innovation and programming. Her nominator observed, "Leah consistently is focused on service within her field as well as to the visitors that come to her zoo every day." Her most recent service to the field comes in the form of her fifth book, **Teaching the Museum: Careers in Museum Education**. Published by AAM in 2014, it is a must read for museum educators.

Congratulations to Leah Melber, 2014 EdCom Excellence in Practice award winner! Read the Lincoln Park Zoo [press release](#) on the award.



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 for inclusion in the newsletter, and we'll share your ideas with the museum education community.

Session Proposal Submission Process Now Open!

Over 5,000 museum professionals from around the country and the world will converge in Atlanta next April for the [2015 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo](#). Once again, AAM is facilitating a crowd-sourced process through which conference sessions will be developed and selected.

Proposals can be submitted to the [session proposal site](#) between now and Monday, Aug. 25. If you submit an idea in the Education, Curation & Evaluation track, you'll receive formative feedback from members of EdCom's Annual Conference Committee—as well as from the AAM community-at-large—that will allow you to strengthen your proposal and identify potential co-presenters and resources. Not sure if you'd like to organize a session yourself? Contribute to the success of the 2015 conference by sharing your suggestions to improve proposals or volunteering to co-present!

AAM recommends getting an early start, since those who wait until the deadline to submit a proposal miss out on valuable input from peers. Last year, 70% of accepted proposals were built within the first four weeks of the proposal process opening.

Be sure to check out the [Session Proposal Guidelines](#) and [visit the online platform](#) to submit or share feedback. We look forward to reading your proposal!

Seeking Regional and State Representatives

Are you interested in serving the museum education field and becoming more connected to education-minded professionals in your area? In order to better represent museum education across the country and bring EdCom programming to you, EdCom needs to establish a strong network that includes representation of each region and state to serve on the Membership Committee. There are currently 38 positions available. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the EdCom board and participate in realizing the various strategic goals. [Learn more about the Membership Committee and vacant positions.](#)

If you have questions or are interested in becoming a representative, please contact Leah Fox, Membership Chair, at lfox@currier.org.

Call for Volunteers

Over the next two years, EdCom will be working to define, foster, and celebrate best practices in museum

education; and investigate, articulate and provoke “next” practices. You can be a part of this. EdCom is looking for volunteers to serve on committees.

If you would like to be involved in the work of an EdCom committee, please let us know by filling out the form linked below. You may rank up to 3 committees on which you would like to serve, and there is space for you to describe any special credentials or experience that would be useful for us to know.

You can sign up for your preferred committee placements here: <http://bit.ly/edcomvolunteers>. You will then be contacted by an EdCom representative and informed of your committee placement so you can get started!

The primary work of each committee can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/edcomvolunteers>.

One Good Thing

Innoskate

Next practices in museum engagement consider trends in learning, demographics, and changes locally and nationally, and their implications for the future. Each edition of the newsletter highlights an exemplary program happening in a different region that illustrates next practices by EdCom member museums. The Museum of History and Industry in Seattle is inviting all ages for a community celebration of skateboarding innovations on **Aug. 16**. Innoskate will feature demonstrations, skate clinics, conversations with skate park designers, product artists, and social activists, and so much more! This program is presented by MOHAI, the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation, and the International Association of Skateboard Companies in partnership with Grindline Skateparks and Skate Like a Girl.

Join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter about Innoskate and what institutional values are prioritized to realize such a program.

Meet the Board

Niki Stewart, Membership Committee Chair-Elect

Why are you involved in EdCom?

Being connected to colleagues is very important to me - I learn so much from everyone! Being a part of EdCom makes it possible to stay connected to everyone, and share best practices in an open way.

What's your day job?

Director of Education and Exhibitions at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, in Bentonville, Arkansas.

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

Taking our practice outside the walls of the museum.

What advice do you have for new museum education professionals?

Seriously consider every opportunity that comes your way—even if you're nervous. You can do so much more than you think.

What is one fun fact about yourself?

I worked for Disney for a decade: as an artist, as an educator and in the entertainment department. So, if you have a Mickey Mouse watch, there's a pretty good chance that I drew the Mickey on your wrist.



Tim Rhue II, Communications Committee Chair-Elect

Why are you involved in EdCom?

I believe I can make a difference in individual lives and the public at large through museum education, and I think others can too. Through EdCom, I hope to help me and other museum professionals develop the skills necessary, and maintain the passion required to make a difference.

**What's your day job?**

Explainers Program Manager for the National Air and Space Museum. In short, I'm a cat herder. I'm charged with over 40 high school and college students who have over 300,000 interactions with the public a year. I love educating both a small audience deeply (the Explainers) and a large audience shallowly (the general public).

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

People making connections.

What advice do you have for museum professionals?

Remember why you got involved in this business and do what it takes to maintain and share that passion with others. If you don't love what you do, you're in the wrong business.

What is one fun fact about yourself

I still have one baby and four wisdom teeth in my mouth.

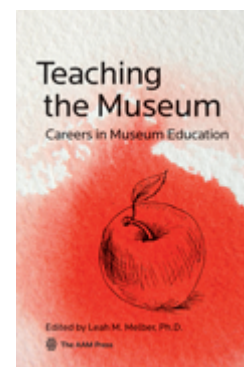
July/August issue of Museum is **now available** online for Alliance members



New from
The AAM Press

**Teaching the Museum:
Careers in Museum
Education**

Edited by Leah M.
Melber, Ph.D.

**Calendar**

- Aug. 9–16** **Invite Congress to Visit Your Museum week**
- Aug. 25** **2015 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo Session Proposal Deadline**
- Sept. 3** **Embracing 360 Engagement: Widening the Circle**
Part of **Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement** webcast series
- Sept. 9** **How Energy Changes Culture**
An Alliance Online Town Hall
- Dec. 3** **Building Trust through High Performance, Becoming Essential**
Part of **Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement** webcast series



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