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EdCom Newsletter: December 2015

Chair's Corner

Did you do that thing at Thanksgiving where everyone around the dinner table says what they're grateful for? If I had to answer that question for my professional life, my EdCom colleagues would come to mind. In the spirit of the holiday season, I'd like to recognize some of their important work over the past year.

Jason Porter led a group of volunteers to assess education-related session proposals for the annual meeting, providing formative feedback to strengthen them for the review process. **Elissa Frankle** and **Claudia Ocello** conceived and launched a new innovation award for education. **Megan Wood** collaborated with the Museum Education Roundtable to shape last month's virtual book chat and with **Jason Yoon** re-invented the Marketplace of Ideas to encourage more substantive conversation. **Tim Rhue** coordinated a team of volunteers to seed our social media channels with useful resources and news affecting museum education. **Tony Penney** and **Sheri Levinsky-Raskin** initiated and helped design the recent 3-part professional development webcast, *Stories of Inclusion*. **Niki Stewart** helped grow our membership to over 1,860 people, and **Kelly McKinley** supported these initiatives with critical behind-the-scenes work. Thanks, team, for your continued service to the field.

Happy holidays, everyone.



Sarah Jesse
Chair, EdCom

Voices From The Field

**Cynthia Robinson, Director,
Museum Studies at Tufts University and Editor-in-Chief of the
Journal of Museum Education**

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Calendar

December 10, 2015:

[Play conference 2016 Submissions
are due](#)

December 13, 2015:

[John Cotton Dana Award for
Leadership nominations close](#)

January, 2016:

[Marketplace for Ideas request for
proposals will be issued](#)

January 31, 2016:

[EdCom Awards of Excellence and
new Innovation Award nominations
close](#)

February, 2016:

[EdCom elections are open](#)



What does a museum educator need to know? I ask this question incessantly as I tinker with the classes that I teach and the graduate program that I direct.

After years in museums, I now find myself in a university, preparing others for museum work. When I began my career in the late 1970s, museum educators focused on school groups.

Now they do so much more... and also have to know more than I did when I started. There wasn't much museum-generated literature back then, but now there's plenty, providing a solid foundation for museum teaching and learning.

Like many in my generation of museum educators, I mostly taught myself about museums through seat-of-the-pants learning. While it made me take charge of educating myself, what I didn't get was a wider perspective. I must have reinvented the wheel a thousand times in my museum because I did not know what others were doing.

The wider perspective is critical. It saves time and facilitates choice of the best strategies for a particular situation. More importantly, it encourages museum educators to pay attention to the world. With museums now widely seen as platforms for weaving social fabric and building civic engagement, museum educators should be looking up and out to identify issues and audiences.

So what does a museum educator need to know? I am still formulating my answer to this, but can say that he or she needs to know how to do things requiring more skill-based expertise than content-based knowledge. The successful museum educator has a high level of executive function and is politically savvy, able to navigate in and out of the museum. He or she is a critical and creative thinker and can connect with many types of people. As IMLS' 21st Century Skills [report](#) suggests, the successful museum educator is literate in a variety of mediums. And when he or she needs to know something new, he or she turns to literature and colleagues.

EdCom Awards for Excellence

EdCom has recognized outstanding contributions to museum education since 1983. Over the course of four newsletters we are highlighting the accomplishments of this year's award winners. If you know a person, program or resource worthy of recognition, [nominations are now open](#).

Excellence in Practice

Suzy Harris, Birmingham Museum of Art

Accepted by Suzy Harris

Find us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn



Nominated by Toby Richards, Birmingham Museum of Art

Suzy Harris has worked for 24 years as an educator, administrator and curator and her influence is felt nationally and locally in the field of museum education. Besides serving on local and statewide non-profit boards she has been involved with EdCom and NAEA. Her commitment to the community, her high standards, and her accomplishments in teaching, outreach, community programming, exhibition development, and working with teachers, schools, students, and inclusive audiences impressed the judges.



Nominations Are Open

Nominations are now open for the EdCom Awards of Excellence in Practice, Programming and Resources.

- The Award for Excellence in Practice recognizes an individual whose contributions may be through teaching, program development, community organizing, writing, research and/or professional activities. Awardees meet, establish and promote the highest professional standards and are recognized as leaders in their field. [Submit nominations by January 31, 2016](#) .
- The Award for Excellence in Programming recognizes programs that have clearly articulated goals, are designed to achieve the goals with the intended audiences, have concrete evidence of success, have been presented three consecutive years and reflect institutional commitment. [Submit nominations by January 31, 2016](#).
- The Award for Excellence in Resources recognizes outstanding resources in print or print/multimedia formats that show meaningful audience, reflect best practices in education theory and demonstrate creativity in design. [Submit nominations by January 31, 2016](#).

The Award for Innovation in Music Education

We are pleased to announce the inauguration of a new EdCom award.

[The Award for Innovation in Museum Education](#) will go to either an individual or team in conjunction with a program, resource or media piece, and could include a museum program done outside the museum walls, in the community. We define innovation as a new technology, practice, or methodology, or repurposing of an old or existing method or practice.

Programs/projects that clearly address one or more of the challenges cited in the Center for the Future of Museums' "Building the Future of Education: Museums and the Learning Ecosystem" (available for download [here](#)) and/or respond to broad trends in education and museum education (either in the K-12 world or learning for adults, seniors, and preK audiences) will be given special consideration. [Submit nominations by January 31, 2016](#).

The John Cotton Dana Award for Leadership

You can still nominate someone for the John Cotton Dana Award for Leadership, which recognizes an individual, other than someone working directly with museum education programs, for efforts on behalf of public education and community service (museum educators not eligible). [Hurry, nominations due by December 13, 2015!](#)

Calls for Proposals

The Play Conference 2016 - Call for Proposals New Museum Track



The US Play Coalition is seeking educational session presenters for [The Play Conference 2016: Rebooting Play](#), April 3-6 at Clemson University. The latest research and practices in the field of play are presented at this annual conference. The educational sessions will be divided into tracks again this year: Education, Programming, Parks and Recreation, Health, Business/Corporate and NEW THIS YEAR, Museums. Accepted presentations can apply for research and action grants. The [deadline for submissions](#) has been extended for EdCom members. The deadline is now Thursday, December 10, 2015.



One Good Thing

One Good Thing Spencer Museum of Art The University of Kansas SMA Collection Cards

Collection Cards are the Spencer Museum of Art's newest educational resource—vibrant trading cards that feature works of art from the Museum's collection and enhance arts education programs at the Spencer and in local K-12 classrooms. Each card includes a secret code (the object's accession number) and a url that directs users to the Collection Cards website, where they enter the code to learn more about the work of art and the artist or maker. The first thematic edition of the Collection Cards focused on animals, plants, places and people; and the second edition explored heroes. In fall 2015, the Museum will release the next volume of trading cards, which will engage youth with works of art that address science, technology, engineering and math. Collection Cards are a unique tool for sparking and sustaining curiosity about the arts while expanding engagement beyond the Museum and classroom walls.

The Collection Cards and the online component were designed to expand engagement with works of art beyond the museum walls. This outreach program fosters cross-participation in the Museum's educational programs, encouraging students who take part in school tours to also participate in the Museum's weekend programs where they can collect more cards. Collecting, trading and interacting with the cards creates agency among youth allowing for more self-directed and self-selecting learning.

Mark Your Calendar

2016 Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition

Museums rely on exhibition labels to inform visitors with clear concise, and captivating copy. This combination is not easily achieved. By highlighting best practices and showcasing innovative work, the Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition aims to inspire all of us to compose better labels.

Please consider submitting your work and encourage others to participate. This year's panel of jurors includes label experts representing EdCom, CurCom, NAME and last year's awardees. Recognized labels will be on display at the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting. Please [submit to the competition](#) before midnight on December 13.

Marketplace of Ideas

EdCom will be hosting a Marketplace of Ideas session at the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting in Washington, DC on Friday, May 27 from 3:00 p.m.-5:00 pm. In January, EdCom will put out a request for proposals looking for individuals or pairs to facilitate roundtable discussions with peers. More details will be available on the EdCom website and in future newsletters.

New UK Program: Space for Learning

A new publication and [website](#) has been launched in the UK called Space for Learning “for all those who plan, design, fund, manage, resource, programme and develop learning spaces within museums, galleries and built and natural heritage sites.” This is the second edition of a 2004 publication and the case studies and lessons learned are invaluable for anyone planning a learning (education) space in any museum. Foremost among the many funders and supporters of this project is the Clore Duffield Foundation which has funded a total of 50 learning spaces—to date—in venues around the UK including the Royal Academy of Arts, which plans to open a new Learning Centre in 2018 for their 250th anniversary.

Case studies and other information will be added to the website.



EdCom Elections

Election season is almost upon us! Each year, EdCom leadership puts forward a slate of candidates for open committee chair-elect positions. These candidates are selected from EdCom's volunteer pool, and serve a three-year term: one year as committee chair-elect, and two years as committee chair. In February 2016, we will put forward a slate for four open positions: Communications chair-elect, Membership chair-elect, Annual Conference committee chair-elect and Secretary. You can learn more about each of these committees [here](#).

Want to get involved in EdCom's leadership? Become a volunteer first! Sign up to volunteer [here](#). We're currently looking for some additional volunteers for Communications and the Annual Conference committee to assist us through the spring of 2016—please use the form linked above to express your interest in helping out.

Stay tuned for a separate elections email in February.



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