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**EdCom Newsletter:  
June 2015**

## Chair's Corner

I've recently gotten into the habit of asking colleagues the same simple question—"What have you been reading lately?" This query almost always generates a fascinating response and is the main reason my Amazon Wish List keeps growing. Our field naturally attracts lifelong learners, earnest about doing good work, so it's no surprise we're collectively reading so many interesting books and articles. Given the increasingly multifaceted nature of our jobs today, being great educators requires that we seek diverse sources to fill inevitable knowledge gaps. In any given role, we might be responsible for managing budgets and people, specializing in content and audience areas, and making pitches to funders. The "What Are You Reading?" section of the newsletter reveals resources that have been useful to the recommender in some way, whether by offering new research, information, or a different perspective. Share what you're reading and how it's been valuable—submit your recommendation to [edcomweb@gmail.com](mailto:edcomweb@gmail.com).



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## What Are You Reading?

Each month we ask luminaries in the field what's on their nightstand. This newsletter features Jacqueline Terrassa, Managing Museum Educator of Gallery and Studio Programs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and NAEA Museum Education Division Director.

### *Robert Gober: The Heart Is Not a Metaphor*

This past December I saw the [retrospective](#) of Robert Gober's work at MoMA. On impulse, I bought the catalogue. The show had moved me, and a friend had told me that the book included an essay by a writer that interests me, Hilton Als. I have never read anything like this Als piece. It prompted me to think about the power of personal viewpoint and empathy in the process of interpretation. Throughout the text, Als's stance is searching, never argumentative. His voice urgent and at times confessional—what we might hear when someone we're getting to know shares with us private memories. The story

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## Calendar

### August 26, 2015:

Stories of Inclusion  
Live Webinar

### September 17-21, 2015:

[Museum Education and Accessibility: Bridging the Gaps ICOM-CECA Conference](#)  
Washington, D.C.

### October 2015:

Virtual Book Chat, date TBD

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he tells unfolds in continuous episodes that vary in intensity, ebbing and flowing and moving the reader through an emotional and historical landscape that is Gober's and Als's own. This landscape maps to the shared experience of the New York cultural scene of the 70s and 80s, to the AIDS crisis in the late 80s and 90s, and to its aftermath. Contextual passages rooted in life lived weave with cultural associations as well as descriptions of Gober's practice. Als asks,

leaving questions unanswered, and ultimately tells us a human story.



## Awards of Excellence

Each year, EdCom presents awards of excellence for practitioners leading the charge in our field, programs setting the standard for quality, and resources crafted with care and supporting visitors and participants. There is also a special award presented for practitioners outside of the museum education field who provide thoughtful, creative leadership that improves and challenges our work.

This year, four awards were presented at the EdCom business luncheon at the AAM Annual Meeting in Atlanta. We'll be spotlighting each of the winning programs and practitioners in upcoming newsletters this year. Congratulations to our award winners!

**\*Excellence in Resources:** "I'm Here" Gallery Guide Series, [Phoenix Art Museum](#)

**\*Excellence in Programming:** [Native American Fellowship](#), Peabody Essex Museum

**\*Excellence in Practice:** [Suzy Harris](#), Birmingham Museum of Art

**\*John Cotton Dana Award for Leadership:** [Elee Wood](#), PhD, Indiana University School of Liberal Arts

## Voices from the Field

Howard McPhail was one of 9 people to receive a fellowship to attend the AAM Annual Conference in Atlanta in the area of Education and Audience Engagement. He contributed this top 10 list for us. If you're interested in looking into fellowships for next year, watch [AAM's website](#) for details in a few months.

### Top 10 2015 AAM Conference Diversity Fellow Observations

10. I wasn't prepared for the sheer size or international scope. The choices were \*ridiculously and painfully wonderful. Multiple sessions focused on information that was exactly what I needed, happening at the same time all day long?!!

9. Everyone was in the same mode— making connections. Actual statistic: I handed out 72 business cards.

8. While listening to the volunteer community historian at the end of the King Memorial DIVCOM field trip, I saw museum professionals from around the world intently connected to a story and historical legacy passionately described. It was very moving.



7. I strategized early on with EdCom mentor Tony Pennay on how to best utilize my conference time. Consulting a seasoned conference veteran was a relief.
6. Toss up on trending takeaway ideas from multiple sessions: [Rapid and Rigorous Prototyping](#) OR [3D printing](#).
5. The following comments are taken completely out of context from conversations I had at the conference. I've added the place that the person represented.  
  
"We should definitely collaborate" – Mongolia  
"Dr. Cole used air quotes around the term "minority" in her keynote" – Brooklyn, NY  
"Once my government approves, I'll have an exhibition in a few years" - China  
"I don't think you could be Maasai" – Nairobi, Kenya  
"Ask them what they want to celebrate" – New Mexico  
"I didn't know that artist had ties to Alabama" – India  
"Come visit and we'll have coffee" – Seattle
4. I now have two incredible professional profile pictures from different photographers – FOR FREE!
3. I've already contacted new colleagues from the conference about actual projects, programs and exhibitions.
2. I doubt there's a way to deliver a clearer challenge in a keynote address that makes the audience 100% responsible.
1. It was an amazing experience.

\* *Oxymoron alert*

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## Mark Your Calendar

On August 26, 2015, EdCom will present a live webcast, "Stories of Inclusion," the first in a series of AAM programs in support of our initiative to investigate inclusive practice in cultural institutions. Mark your calendars for "Stories of Inclusion," scheduled from 2-2:30pm (EDT). If you are interested in hosting a viewing event of the webinar at your institution, please contact your EdCom Professional Development Chair, [Tony Pennay](#).

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## Calling You: To Make Us Laugh!

In the hectic, fast-paced, screaming and shrieking world that is museum education, we all need a good belly laugh once in a while, right? And that is why we are asking for your best and funniest museum educator stories. Had an encounter with a visitor that still makes you fall off your chair laughing? Worked on some program that went in an unexpected and funny direction? Tell us about it!

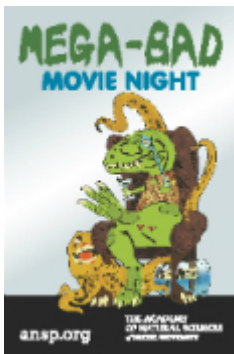
Email the EdCom team at [edcomweb@gmail.com](mailto:edcomweb@gmail.com) with your funny story, and we'll publish it in the August 2015 issue! All we ask is to keep it clean and short – approximately 100 words, and then we can laugh and laugh and laugh...

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## One Good Thing

## **Mega-Bad Movie Night**

*The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University*



**Mega-Bad Movie Night** is a Mystery Science Theater-esque series held at the Academy of Natural Sciences as an inventive way to attract young adults to the museum. Attendees explore a pre-film reception complete with animals, collections, and activities catered to the themes in the film. *Them!* is the film? Guests touch live insects, eat cooked bugs, and see specimens from Entomology. *Sharktopus* is the film? We pull shark and cephalopod specimens from the collections and talk about animal hybridizing. Now our traveling version, *Mega-Bad Movie Night On Tour*, takes the same movie commentary, specimens, and collections beyond our walls. The program achieves best practices by using pop culture as a conversation piece. Our collections are utilized in light of films. Our scientists blend their field or lab work into “date night”

conversations. Whether *Sharknado 3* or *Jurassic World*, our academic institution is having conversations about science through film.

### **Leadership Lowdown**

Each newsletter we'll introduce one of our committee chair elects for whom you voted. If you're interested in helping with one of our committees, [see our volunteer site](#). This month we meet EdCom's Chair-Elect of Museum Education Issues **Jason Yoon**.

#### **Why are you involved in EdCom?**

To learn more about the field and share what we are doing here in Queens.

#### **What's your day job?**

Director of Education at Queens Museum.

#### **What is the future of museum education in 10 words (or fewer)?**

Experiences that promote agency and build community.



#### **Recalling your expectations on your first day as a museum education professional, what is one thing that has surprised you about working in museum education?**

The amount of ongoing experimentation and iteration in the field.

#### **When you need inspiration as an educator, who or what do you turn to?**

Lots of places but I'll often find myself re-reading the essays in Herb Kohl's *I Won't Learn From You: And Other Thoughts on Creative Maladjustment* to be continually reminded of the brilliance within all of the communities we are lucky to work with as educators, and to remember that learning doesn't/shouldn't always happen on the terms I dictate.

### **AAM Recap: Georgia on Our Minds**

This year's conference in Atlanta that explored the social work of museums featured a whole host of wonderful Education-related sessions on topics ranging from early childhood in the museum to the efforts by museums to engage in dialogue with their visitors about important social issues. EdCom hosted a wonderful opening night party, co-sponsored by the Museum Education Roundtable, at the lovely Atlanta Museum of Contemporary Art (at which the paramedics were only called once, which is an EdCom record!). EdCom also hosted an inspiring and informative luncheon with guest speaker, Doug Shipman, CEO of the National Center for Civic and Human

Rights and the presentation of our four education-related awards. This year's Marketplace of Ideas sessions in the Exhibition Hall were both well-attended and inspiring as colleagues from around the country shared case study presentations on experimental and "next practices" learning programs.

Each year the conference provides a wonderful forum for networking, learning, and exchanging ideas, and for exploring the cultural offerings of the host city. Through the efforts of a number of EdCom members based in Atlanta along with the national committee, many of us experienced the world-famous Georgia hospitality at events and insight sessions at the High Museum, the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, the Atlanta History Center, and other local venues. It was a memorable conference, and we're already thinking about the plans for the conference next year in Washington, D.C. If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved with the EdCom conference committee, [check out the EdCom volunteer website](#).



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