

# Ethnobotany Collection Gets Extreme Makeover!

*Submitted by Jamie Merkel ■*

I started my position at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology (UMMA) last November. I was hired to manage the re-housing of the Museum's ethnobotany collection, which includes ethnobotanical, archaeobotanical, systematic comparative, and herbarium specimens, an estimated 33,000 objects in all. As I have now been here for a year, I thought I would share an update on our progress thus far with everyone!

My first challenge was to assess the re-housing needs of the various types of objects in our collection. We had jars of dried tubers that were initially immersed in alcohol, but as the alcohol had long ago evaporated they were now reduced to shriveled bits. We had corn that had been badly infested by pests, which not only had the audacity to eat our collections, but once they had gorged themselves to their death decided to leave their insect bodies, wedged between kernels of corn, behind as well. And we had plants that were simply not of an average size, either because they were long and narrow like an ear of corn or a dried stalk of yucca, or because they were so small (from tiny seeds to pollen) that to place them in a box alone would be neglect.

Now, after a year of research, conversations with other museum professionals, and plain trial

and error, we are well on our way to meeting our goal. The shriveled-up tubers have been re-immersed in a 70% solution of ethyl alcohol and have (somewhat surprisingly, although thankfully) rehydrated and remained intact. The hundreds of ears of corn have been cleaned with a HEPA vacuum and small brush attachment, sealed in archival plastic sleeves, and placed in custom-made boxes constructed of archival cardboard and

lined with ethafoam and appropriately placed tri-rod. Seeds have been placed in vials, and we now have a crew of five student workers that are able to wield a straight edge and a utility knife to make beautiful custom-made boxes with tight-fitting, clear-view Mylar lids.

We have thus far successfully re-housed three cabinets of corn, two cabinets of fibers and one of comparative wood. We are currently working on a second cabinet of wood and plan to start on our three cabinets full of seeds early next year. How many

thousands of seeds there are, I am not sure. We also just got four new herbarium cabinets installed and are beginning to unravel some of the mysteries that were left behind in boxes, interleaved between sheets of old newspapers. I am sure it will be another interesting and productive year.



*Hundreds of ears of corn have been cleaned and stabilized as just one small part of the re-housing of collections at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.*

# From the Chair

Submitted by Ann Sinfield ■

No, Patti Smith is not the new Chair (the picture had you fooled, though, didn't it?). But over the past few months the MRC Board has seen a number of personnel changes. Although these are the result of many factors--elections, relocations, professional responsibilities, adverse economic forces--I am happy to report all of the people stepping down have expressed a willingness to continue within the MRC. By actively participating in new directions such as workshop development, conference planning, or even mentoring their replacements, these members are demonstrating a truly praiseworthy sense of commitment. We are lucky to have such a dedicated membership.

Please welcome the following members to their new positions:

**Vice Chair: Karen O'Brien**, Collections Manager, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan

**Illinois Representative: Amy Heggemeyer**, Assistant Registrar for Acquisitions, The Spurlock Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Missouri Representative: Kate Keil**, Curator of Collections, Missouri State Museum

**Wisconsin Representative: Craig Hadley**, Collections Manager & Exhibits Coordinator, Wright Museum of Art at Beloit College

**Newsletter editor & designer:** After six years of producing the MRC newsletter, Laura Henderson and Michelle Hill have decided to take a break and are ending their terms as editor and design/layout editor. This is such sad news, as the *Courier* has really flourished in their hands. But after regularly producing 3-4 issues every year, and lobbying successfully for the transformation to a digital publication, these two deserve a breather!

We have recruited new volunteers for each position, both starting with the Winter, 2011 issue. **Jamie Merkel** at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology will take over as editor, and **Tamara Lange**, Collections Coordinator at the Sheboygan County Historical Society & Museum in Wisconsin will handle the layout and design of the newsletter.

## Recap of AMM 2010 in Cleveland

The Mighty Rescue Crew celebrated a second successful year working at two sites in Cleveland, at the Western Reserve Historical Society and the Dunham Tavern Museum. Projects included object



numbering and completing an inventory of the first floor of a historic house. Thank you to Ohio State Representative Joanne Fenn for her assistance in organizing the event, to Casey Wigglesworth at Huntington T. Block for providing white gloves, and

to the 14 volunteers who came and worked!

The MRC annual meeting and luncheon was again held off-site at a local restaurant, Crop Bistro and Bar. AMM secured two sponsorships for the luncheon: Jeff Minett from Huntington T. Block and Carolyn Hays from TruView were among the 24 members in attendance. Leslie Freund represented the RC-AAM. The annual reports will appear, as usual, in the Winter 2011 issue of the newsletter.

You probably know that Patti Smith played at the opening reception in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. You might think the performance of her band has absolutely no relation to registration or collections management.

On stage, however, she talked about how she enjoyed seeing artifacts in the Rock Hall, as she had personal connections to many items on display—definitely an unusual perspective! She also emphasized the importance of experiencing live music. In highlighting the uniqueness of live performance for an audience comprised of museum staff, it seemed that this rock star understood the value of the original, of objects, their special qualities, and the unique experiences they present. That, in addition to the show, was awesome.

## AAM 2011 in Houston

*The Museum of Tomorrow* is the theme for the 105<sup>th</sup> AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, May 22-25, 2011 in Houston, Texas. If you go, consider sharing your experience with MRC members by sending a session review or a story to the newsletter.

## AMM in Chicago, July 2011

The AMM 2011 conference is scheduled for July 24-27, 2011 at Chicago's Palmer House Hilton. A joint conference with the Visitors Studies Association and the Illinois Association of Museums, it promises to be a lively gathering.

Session proposals have been submitted. We hope to have workshops available, in addition to tours, an off-site luncheon and meeting, the third Mighty Rescue Crew, and possibly a reception. And the best news—over the next few months watch for announcements as even more travel stipends become available. Hope to see you there!

# Letter from the Editor

Submitted by Laura Henderson ■

As many of you know, Michelle Hill and I are handing the *Courier* over to other dedicated MRC members starting in 2011, so this is our final issue. Jamie Merkel will take over as editor and Tamara Lange will do design and layout starting with the first issue in 2011. I have mixed emotions about giving up the *Courier* but at the same time am happy and grateful for the opportunities it has provided for meeting colleagues, collaborating with them, learning from them, helping them, reporting their news and accomplishments, and, of course, partying with them.

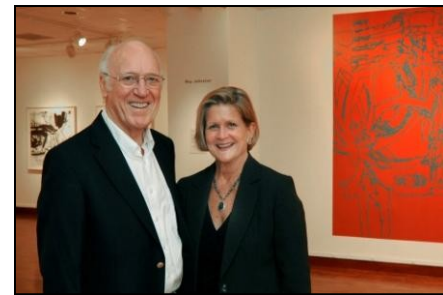
Michelle and I have both truly enjoyed putting this newsletter together over the past six years and feel that by working as a team we were able to accomplish a lot more than one person alone could do. Michelle's journalism experience, design/layout talents and ability to sleuth out images were a great complement to my nitpicking editing skills.

I want to say thank you first of all to Michelle for being a great partner, and also thanks to all the members of the MRC and AMM for sending news, reports, stories and images to make the *Courier* a newsworthy publication. Keep them coming in to Jamie and Tamara! And very special thanks to Laurie Booth for all her informative and interesting contributions to *Conservators Corner*. I have had many favorable comments praising Laurie's expertise and her skill in providing precise and professional advice in layman's terms that we can easily grasp and put to use.

To the current Board members and state reps, thanks for all your help and your kind words of appreciation that you extended to us regarding our service on the *Courier*, and to past members and reps I want to express my admiration and praise for the network you have set up. The MRC is a truly unique group of people who are knowledgeable, professional, skilled and informed and who are also compassionate and caring, always willing to help each other any way they can. I am delighted to have been part of this and will continue to be involved in other ways.

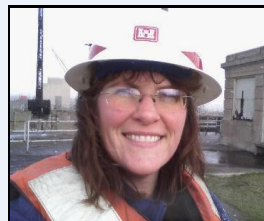
I must also thank Jane Weinke, who is the one that pulled me into this in the first place (What? You want me to actually *edit* the newsletter, like, be the *editor*?) She said yes, precisely, and Michelle Hill will do the design and layout. I didn't thank her then, but once Michelle and I got together and worked out that first issue, we were hooked. I hope Jamie and Tamara enjoy

it as much as we did—I'm sure they will do a great job and I look forward to reading the new, future *Courier* in 2011. BTW, Jamie and Tamara, you have NO idea how much easier we've made it for you by going digital!!



Laura Henderson and husband Roy Johnston at his recent exhibition.

## Looking back on five fun years



Submitted by Michelle Hill ■

When the call went out for a new MRC *Courier* editor, I was nervous as I approached then president Jane Weinke. I wanted to be more involved with the MRC, but like everyone else

I had limits on my time and skills.

Despite being a professional journalist in my previous career, I have some serious grammar issues. To this day I cannot explain the functional difference between colons and semi-colons, unless it is to make a winking smiley face or a regular one! ;-) And don't even get me started on who or whom . . .

Much to my relief, Jane said someone had volunteered to do the grammatical editing already and asked if I would be willing to do the formatting? Without ever meeting each other, Laura and I started our first issue with flurries of emails flying between Ohio and Michigan.

We did several issues before we finally met face to face at a conference. At a meeting of MRC officers I enjoyed a private little joke when about an hour had passed before Laura realized who I was. Of course I had been putting her picture into the *Courier* and recognized her instantly. She did not have the same advantage!

As we wrap up our last issue I have to say it has been a lot of fun 'designing' the *Courier*, and working with Laura has been great. I also want to recognize the MANY MANY interns over the years who have been good sports posing for pictures and providing feedback!

It has been a great ride and I hope Jamie and Tamara will have as much fun as Laura and I did.



## News from All Over State Reports

### Illinois

#### Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, Springfield

##### Exhibitions:

*Team of Rivals: Lincoln's Cabinet at the Crossroads of War*, October 14, 2010 - August 15, 2011

Commemorate the beginning of the *Civil War Sesquicentennial* with a visit to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum for its one-of-a-kind temporary exhibition. What is it like to be President...when faced with a decision for war?

This exhibition takes you *inside* the highest levels of the United States government as Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet struggle with the momentous issue of war. Restricted to the information they possessed at the time, you will confront the perplexities and options they faced during the first weeks of Lincoln's presidency and



decide for yourself if they made the right choices!

Following the approach so skillfully employed by Doris Kearns Goodwin in her critically acclaimed book *Team of Rivals*, the exhibition uses the experiences of Lincoln's closest advisors to illuminate Lincoln's leadership. A combination of compelling artifacts, images, and audio/visual presentations introduces you to the powerful personalities who advised the President and brings to life those fateful days when a divided nation teetered on the brink... then toppled into the dark abyss of **civil war**...

### Indiana

Submitted by Lana Newhart-Kellen ■

#### Red Skelton Museum, Vincennes

Frank Ladner of Lawrenceville, Illinois has donated \$1 million to the Red Skelton Museum, which will be located at the Red Skelton Performing Arts Center on the Vincennes University campus.

The new museum will exhibit memorabilia and displays about the comedian. Skelton, a native of Vincennes, Indiana, is best remembered for his influence on early television and comedy, including the characters Clem Kadiddlehopper and Freddie the Freeloader.

*No matter what your heartache may be, laughing helps you forget it for a few seconds.*

-Red Skelton

Red Skelton's life story will be tangibly visible in the Red Skelton Museum and Education Center as his collection of costumes, awards and paintings are displayed alongside fading newspaper headlines extolling his fame and humanitarian deeds.

It will be a place for people to be inspired, to learn of goodness, generosity, grace under trial, a work ethic and get an understanding of an indomitable spirit: a true gift for posterity.



*The future home of the Red Skelton Museum on the Vincennes University Campus.*

### **Conner Prairie Interactive History Park, Fishers**

Conner Prairie Interactive History Park is proud to announce it has received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This award recognizes institutions for outstanding social, educational, environmental or economic contributions to their communities. Conner Prairie is only the second living history museum ever to receive the honor. This marks the third straight year that an Indiana museum has received the IMLS award. The two previous Indiana winners are The Indianapolis Museum of Art (2009) and the General Lew Wallace Study and Museum in Crawfordsville (2008).

#### Upcoming events:

##### *1863 Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana*

Conner Prairie is announcing a new, one-of-a-kind outdoor experience that puts you right in the middle of an Indiana brush with the Civil War! Opens June 2011, the year which marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War.

Through theatrical wizardry, including video and sound and Conner Prairie actors dressed in authentic period costumes, you become part of the true story of General John Hunt Morgan's raid on Indiana. How would you react to a call to arms? What vital roles did women and children play in this drama? Discover what motivated real, everyday people who lived in Indiana during the Civil War.

Explore the raided village of Dupont at your own pace and gain a better understanding of this piece of Indiana history. This journey is suitable for all ages—kids can climb aboard a replica steamboat, splash in an interactive water play area and get hands-on in an indoor play zone.

#### *The Story of Morgan's Raid*

In July 1863, just days after the victory at Gettysburg, Hoosier militia companies and civilian volunteers rallied to defend Indiana from 2,400 invading Confederate soldiers under the command of General John Hunt Morgan. After the defeat of Hoosier forces at the Battle of Corydon, an estimated 60,000 volunteers answered the call for service to block Morgan from advancing north. By felling trees across roads and armed resistance, these volunteers and Union cavalry chased the Confederates into Ohio, where Morgan and his troops were eventually defeated and captured. *Sneak Peek!*

Civil War re-enactors from throughout the Midwest portrayed Morgan's Raiders, pursuing Union cavalry and southern Indiana civilians during the creation of the *1863 Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana*. To the right is your first look at images from the filmed scenes of this experience. Make your plans to be one of the first to become part of Indiana's Civil War history next June! *1863 Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana* is included in the general admission price and is free for members.

Visit <http://www.connerprairie.org/Plan-Your-Visit/1863-Civil-War-Journey.aspx> for sneak peeks and updates. Click on the video! Share your comments and join the discussion on [Facebook](#).

#### **Cass County Historical Society, Logansport**

On December 6 the Cass County Historical Society will host "An Old Fashioned Christmas" from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Logansport's Children's Choir will perform from 7 to 7:45 p.m. in the museum.

*Below: Civil War re-enactors keep history alive at Connor Prairie Interactive History Park*



## Iowa

Submitted by Jennifer Kovarik ■

### **Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah** *NHPRC Hidden Collections Grant Received*

Luther College, with Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, received a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to hire a project archivist to create a joint digital catalog of the college and museum's archival collections. The project will improve access to thousands of items related to Norwegian-American history and culture. ARCHON, open source software developed at the University of Illinois, will be used to create a platform for archival description and access, as well as a customized web portal and Norwegian-language interface.

#### New Exhibition:

*The Norwegian Art and Craft Club of Brooklyn, 1938-1956*, open from Oct. 21, 2010, through Aug. 2011.

Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum opened a new exhibition of fine art from its collections, *The Norwegian Art and Craft Club of Brooklyn, 1938-1956*. Robert and Evy Alsaker sponsored the exhibit.

The Norwegian Art and Craft Club of Brooklyn, New York, formed in 1938 by a group of amateur and semi-professional artists. They wanted to promote interest in art and craft among members and the public through exhibits, lectures, and classes.

The club did not restrict its membership by ethnicity or by gender. It gave equal status to fine art and Norwegian decorative arts. Members created and exhibited paintings, carving, rosemaling (Norwegian decorative painting), tapestry and knitting.

Starting with 28 founding members, the club grew to over one hundred members by the late 1940s. Well known members of the club included Bernhard Berntsen, Michael Hoiland, Karli Waagenes Johnsen, Karl Larsen, Vilna Jørgen Morpurgo, Maria Mundal, Finn Nord, Thorn Norheim, Sigurd Olsen, August Satre and William Torjesen.

Classes were taught at the club, which, from 1943 to 1956, had its own location at 501 46th Street. The group held exhibitions at the club, local studios, the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Public Library, the Staten Island Museum and the Riverside Museum.



*Images like this 1915 photo of Marie Egge and her daughter will soon be more accessible thanks to a partnership between Luther College and Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum.*

friend Lucy Burns (Frances O'Connor), who put their lives on the line fighting for American women's right to vote. After the film join a panel discussion led by the League of Women Voters and 50/50 in 2020 groups.

### **The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn** Exhibitions:

*Danish American Artist Series: Paul Solevad*, through January 2, 2011

Paul Solevad is a Danish-American artist living in Camas, Washington. This series of work is inspired by exploring the world around us, through study of single-celled organisms, through study of consciousness, and the study of socio-political events.

*Sampling the Collection: A to Å*, through March 6, 2011

See some of the weird, wacky and wonderful pieces from the collection. Featured pieces are a hat from the Spanish American War, a dressmaker's mannequin and a taxidermy Danish bird.

*Danish American Artist Series: Grete Schioler*, January 15-July 10, 2011

Grete Schioler is a weaver and fiber artist living in Dayton, Ohio. The works on view will encompass a

**Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum,** Waterloo  
*90th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment,*  
February 26 • 1:00 - 3:30pm  
\$5 Member, \$6 Non-member

The League of Women Voters, local 50/50 in 2020 group and the Grout Museum District are celebrating 90 years of women's suffrage. Watch the film *Iron Jawed Angels*, telling the remarkable and little known story of a group of passionate and dynamic young women, led by Alice Paul (Hilary Swank) and her



wide range of Schioler's work, including tapestry, silk painting, quilting, appliqué and knitting. Some express her experience as a Danish immigrant, and others her interest in color, texture and contours of both the man-made and natural environments.

### **Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, Northeast Iowa**

#### *Five New Sites Join National Heritage Area*

Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) welcomes five new sites. There are now 108 Partner Sites interpreting different stories of American agriculture, ranging from dairy farms and museums to vineyards and tractor assembly plants. New Partner Site include:

- *Belmond Historical Society Museum, Belmond.* The Museum features a permanent exhibit on the history of the sugar beet industry in Belmond, including the story of growing and refining sugar beets and the economic impact on the community.
- *Cascade Historic Limestone Silo, Cascade.* Built in the early 1930s, this unique historic limestone silo is located on the North Fork Maquoketa River. Visitors to the site learn why the silo's location made it ideal for farmers to store feed for fattening livestock.
- *Eagles Landing Winery, Vineyard and Bed & Breakfast, Marquette.* Located along the banks of the Mississippi River, Eagles Landing B&B is constructed from native oak trees. Guests are treated to a true taste of Iowa and can purchase products made from grapes grown in the vineyard, including jams, table syrups and the site's award-winning wine.
- *Museums of Story County Historical Society, Story City.* The four museum sites in Story City tell of the hardships and successes of the Scandinavian and pioneer immigrants. Visitors learn about the transformation of the prairie into rich farmland along with the growth of a thriving community.
- *Wagaman Mill & Museum, Newton.* Built in 1846 by John R. Sparks was a paddle wheel saw mill on the North Skunk River, it was converted into a grist mill in 1848 with a hydraulic turbine added in 1868 to allow year-round operation. Through an

interactive tour, visitors discover the mill's history producing flour, animal feed, meal and electric power.

"These new sites were the first to go through the newly retooled Partner Site designation process. They worked to become recognized Partner Sites, and their hard work is apparent in how they have presented previously untold stories about Iowa's agricultural heritage," stated Candy Streed, SSNHA Program & Partnership Director.

Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area is one of 49 federally designated heritage areas in the nation and is an Affiliated Area of the National Park Service. The Heritage Area covers 37 counties in northeast Iowa. Interstate 80 borders it on the south and Interstate 35 borders it on the west. Through a network of sites, programs and events, SSNHA interprets past and present farm life, agribusiness and rural communities.

To learn more about becoming a Partner Site, visit [www.silosandsmokestacks.org](http://www.silosandsmokestacks.org).

### **Dubuque Museum of Art, Dubuque**

*God Bless America*, by Seward Johnson, October 13, 2010 - April 4, 2011 (On the museum's west lawn)

At 25 feet high and 14 x 14 feet at its base, and weighing 30,000 pounds, there is no Midwestern reserve to be found in this celebrated and much parodied Iowa couple inspired by Grant Wood's *American Gothic* and towering over the museum this winter.

Seward Johnson has taken the famous duo and literally amplified them to gigantic proportions. No shrinking violets, this pair! They dominate the landscape inspiring viewers to recall a gentler, less complicated (albeit idealized) past and pose for a fun photo op! Johnson is known for his realistic sculptures found in many outdoor venues across the country and his *Beyond the Frame* series, where he re-creates Impressionist paintings into 3-D sculptural scenes where you actually walk among the figures and objects in the paintings. The sculpture has travelled through the United States but this is its first time in Iowa, the home state of Grant Wood.

Sponsored by Woodward Communications/Telegraph Herald, Dr. Randy Lengeling, Bob and Donna Wahlert, Tri-State Independent Physicians Association, Dubuque Internal Medicine, McGraw Hill Employee Grant Program, Jack and Mantea Schmid, Alan and Beth Bird, Ed and Susie Butler Ritts, Prudential, Farber Bag Company, Ken Schubert, and Jim and Jean Gantz.



*American Gothic gets SUPER-SIZED!*

## Michigan

Submitted by Katie Nelson ■

### **Kingman Museum, Battle Creek** *Hands On Training at Kingman Museum!*

This summer Kingman Museum received a two-year grant from IMLS *Conservation Project Support* to re-house part of its permanent collection. Grant funds provide new shelving, acid free materials, a collections assistant and consultation from conservator, Barbara Moore. Barbara gave a training workshop on October 29. Staff and volunteers learned how to transport objects and create storage mounts.

After a short presentation and video, participants got hands on experience rolling textiles, using a foam cutter, stuffing moccasins and more. The two-hour training ran over, but no one minded and everyone felt more invested in the project. Pictures of the training and re-housing project are uploaded regularly onto Kingman's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Kingman-Museum-Inc/36244437749>

### **Mackinac State Historic Parks, Mackinaw City** *No Hibernating at MSHP!*

Three inventory assistants, hired for three years through IMLS *Museums for America* grant funds, are busy working on the archaeological inventory of Fort Michilimackinac. Two interns have joined the staff this winter to work on the new Soldier Biography exhibit/project and process a large part of the archive collections. Planning for the reconstruction of the south, southwest rowhouse at Michilimackinac begins this year with a completed date of 2013. It will be the first new building added to the site since 1989. Events are also being planned to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812 next summer.

### **Soo Locks National Historic Landmark, Sault Ste. Marie**

#### *A New View at the Soo*

A new observation platform is taking shape over



*Tara Bell, a Kingman volunteer and Public History student at Western Michigan University tries her hand at stuffing moccasins.*

the winter at the Soo Locks, a National Historic Landmark in Sault Ste. Marie. The platform offers several improvements over the existing central platform it is replacing and helps solve some serious historic preservation issues.

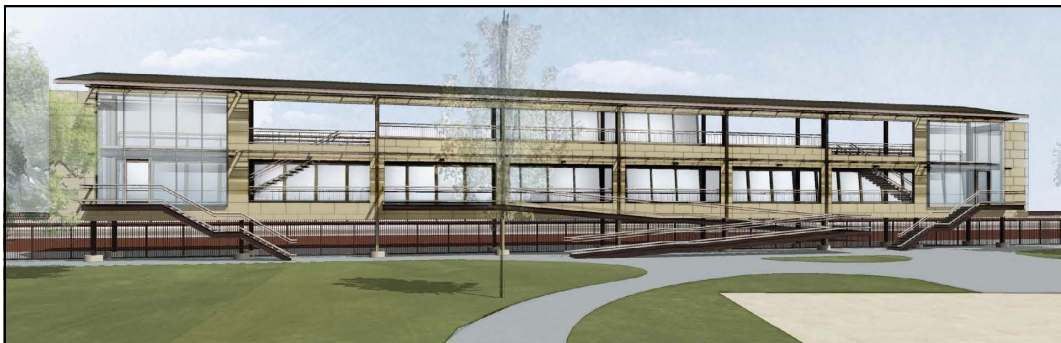
Previously there were three elevated platforms for visitors to see the locks in action, one at the East and West ends of the MacArthur Lock and a larger one in the center. Built on top of existing historic structures, the East and West decks have caused extensive damage to the buildings below. The new central platform more than doubles the capacity for visitors to see the locks and clears the way for the East and West platforms to be removed and the buildings below them stabilized and restored.

The new platform will feature two elevated decks and a ramp allowing handicap access. Until now, visitors in wheelchairs or unable to use stairs could only watch from the ground. Glassed-in sections of the new platform will also provide some protection from wind, snow and rain.

Gaining approval for the change to the site and the specific design and plan for the platform was no simple feat. As a federally owned and managed National Historic Landmark, any proposed change

that alters the appearance of the site has to go through the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service.

The new observation platform is



*A new observation platform is one of the improvements planned at the Soo Locks.*



one of several projects in a new Master Plan for the Soo Locks complex that the Corps, SHIPO and NPS worked on for over a year to formulate. Future improvements in the park include replacing sick and dying trees, restoring sight lines to the fountain and locks, and the introduction of interpretive signs for monuments within the park. Signs explaining how the locks work and overviews of the complex are planned for installation in the new observation platform.

**Museum of Cultural & Natural History,  
Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant**  
*New Director Hired*

Dr. Jay Martin has been named the new Director of the Museum of Cultural and Natural History and Director of the Museum Studies Program. He joined MCNH just this past July and brings with him 28 years experience in Public History, including more than a decade of experience in museum administration.

Dr. Martin holds a Bachelors degree in Public History from Western Michigan University, a Masters in American Studies and a Ph.D. in History from Bowling Green State University. In early 2007 he left the National Park Service to become Executive Director of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum and an Instructor at Southeastern Louisiana University, where he taught American History and Public History courses. His recent efforts include the restoration of the Tchefuncte River Lighthouse in Madisonville, Louisiana. Dr. Martin specializes in developing unique collaborative ventures for sustainable management and interpretation. He is a maritime historian and a former Great Lakes mariner.

*Museum of Cultural & Natural History repatriates remains to local Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.*

The Museum of Cultural and Natural History returned the remains of 144 unaffiliated Native Americans and



*Jay Martin, new director of CMU's Museum of Cultural and Natural History and Museum Studies Program*

associated funerary objects to the tribe for proper burial.

In November 2010, Central Michigan University and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe hosted a public observance of the repatriation of ancestral remains and funerary objects.

CMU began the repatriation process discussions in 2008. The ceremony took place over three days. The remains were carried approximately five miles from the museum to the Tribal cemetery by CMU faculty, staff, students and Tribal members.

**Edsel & Eleanor Ford House and Henry Ford Estate, Dearborn and Grosse Pointe Shores**  
*Edsel & Eleanor Ford House and Henry Ford Estate to Unite*

The University of Michigan-Dearborn and the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shores have reached an agreement to unite the Henry Ford Estate and Ford House in what will become a model of sustainability and 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretation of our nation's heritage.

The Estate will close prior to the July 1, 2011 transfer, allowing restoration work on its buildings and grounds to begin. Ford House anticipates the Estate will reopen in phases to celebrate milestones in Ford Family history, such as Henry Ford's 150th birthday in 2013, the Estate's 100th anniversary in 2015, and Clara Ford's 150th birthday in 2017. To ensure a successful and smooth transition, UM-Dearborn and Ford House will form a transition task force to guide the process over the next 15 months.



*Tribal members, CMU faculty, staff, students participate in the repatriation of Native American remains and funerary objects.*

## Minnesota

Submitted by Jackie Hoff ■

**Science Museum of Minnesota,**  
St. Paul

### Upcoming exhibition:

*Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs*, opens February 18, 2011 and will run through September 5, 2011

Experience the riches of royal life in Egypt more than 3,000 years ago in *Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs*. Discover more than 100 authentic artifacts illuminating the lives of great rulers buried in the Valley of the Kings, including the most famous of them all—King Tut. See the golden sandals that adorned the feet of his mummy and the canopic jar that held his internal organs. Learn about King Tut's ancestors who defined the 18th Dynasty and the pharaohs' function in Egyptian society and religion. Explore the fascinating story behind Howard Carter's discovery of King Tut's tomb in 1922 and the newest scientific discoveries that provide insight into the Boy King's unexpected death.

The Science Museum of Minnesota is still working on our inventory project, as well as a legacy



*A shabti, or funerary figure, depicting Tutankhamun in royal headdress. Shabtis were buried with pharaohs to serve them in the afterlife.*

funded project focusing on the Bishop Whipple Collections that are primarily housed at SMM and The Minnesota Historical Society. Look for more information about this great project in the next issues. We are also getting ready for yearly collaboration with the Baseball Hall of Fame and the Minnesota Twins organization in putting on *TwinsFest*. One of the largest team-run fan festivals in professional sports, *TwinsFest* is an annual fundraiser for the Minnesota Twins Community Fund. Since its inception in 1989, *TwinsFest* has raised more than \$4.2 million for programs and organizations supported by the Twins Community Fund.

### **Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis**

The Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota is now closed until October 1, 2011 for the construction of five new galleries designed by Frank Gehry, the architect who designed the original building. There will now be spaces dedicated to works on paper, the Korean collection and ceramics. There will be two galleries that will tell the story of our collecting mission over the decades plus a flexible space dedicated to innovative collaborations, in addition to special exhibitions and programs. Planning, prepping, and installing ten exhibitions at once make this an exciting and challenging year!

## Glad that's not my mummy!



Just in time for Halloween, the mummy at the Science Museum of Minnesota got a CT scan, conducted by staff at Children's Hospital in St. Paul. While the museum already has a scan and other X-ray studies from 1983, researchers hope to learn even more by using modern imaging equipment.

They hope to come away with a 3-D model of the mummy's inner workings and new details about his life, a more precise age and his cause of death. The results will debut ahead of the Feb. 18 opening of the exhibition on King Tut.

The mummy was donated to the museum in 1925. Researchers think he was a priest more than 3,000 years ago during ancient Egypt's 18th Dynasty, which included King Tut.



## Missouri

### The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Many of the 2010 exhibitions will soon be drawing to a close and replaced by exciting new installations to ring in the New Year. The exhibition, *The Human Body*, a rotation of paintings and prints depicting the human figure as a thing of beauty, will continue through June 5, 2011.

#### Upcoming exhibitions:

*The Photographs of Ray K. Metzker*,  
January 15—June 5, 2011

Metzker's photographs strike a unique balance between formal brilliance, optical innovation and a deep human regard for the objective world. This exhibition will survey the key aspects of Metzker's long career. Nearly 80 years old, he is one of the most dedicated and influential American photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His work is at once varied in approach and rigorously unified in creative sensibility. He is interested in both the reality of the world and in the inventive potential of the photographic process itself. The Nelson-Atkins Museum has the largest collection (92 prints) of Metzker's work in the country, thanks to a gift in 2009 from the Hall Family Foundation.

#### RMB City Opera, February 4—June 5, 2011

Cao Fei (born 1978) lives and works in Beijing. She is part of the young generation described as New Human Beings, who embrace popular consumer culture and all things global, diverse, old, new, intellectual and non-intellectual. Using computers, cell phones and social media, this generation hopes to undermine China's political system.

#### Monet's *Water Lilies*, April 9—August 7, 2011

This ticketed exhibition will reunite the three panels of an exceptionally impressive *Water Lily* triptych, created by Claude Monet between 1915 and 1926. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Saint Louis Museum and the Cleveland Museum of Art each own one panel of the triptych and the exhibition will offer a rare opportunity to bring the works together. This will be the first time that this reunion has occurred for more than 30 years.

### St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis

Renowned American architect Cass Gilbert designed the Saint Louis Art Museum for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also

known as the World's Fair. The building was originally part of the Palace of Fine Arts and was the only building from the Fair designed to be a permanent structure, the "one material monument of the Exposition." It stands as a reminder of that defining event in the history of the city of St. Louis and the State of Missouri.

The Saint Louis Art Museum is undergoing its first major expansion in a generation, designed by



*Ray K. Metzker, American (b. 1931), Philadelphia, 1983; gelatin silver print. Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc., 2005.27.1963*

London-based architect David Chipperfield. Since breaking ground on January 19, 2010, the new underground parking garage has been enclosed by concrete walls with two levels of garage floor completed, and construction of the new Grand Stair is underway. When completed, the stair will link Sculpture Hall with a new Level 1 Concourse and provide a clear connection to galleries, a new café and the parking garage, as well as the South Building

Education Center and the Auditorium.

The expansion of over 200,000 square feet will provide new galleries, public space and more than 300 parking spaces, as well as a new, fully accessible entrance on Fine Arts Drive. The Museum is open to the public during construction and will continue to operate on its current schedule.



*Expansion underway at the St. Louis Art Museum.*



**Ohio***Submitted by Laura Henderson ■***Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati**

One of the oldest arts institutions in the United States, the Cincinnati Art Museum has a rich collection of more than 60,000 works of art, spanning 6,000 years. This unique collection includes the ancient art of Egypt, Greece and Rome as well as Near and Far Eastern art, art of Africa and the Americas, costume and textiles, prints, photographs, paintings, sculpture, decorative art and contemporary art.

**Exhibitions:**

*Wedded Perfection: Two Centuries of Wedding Gowns*, October 9, 2010 - January 30, 2011

*Wedded Perfection* unravels more than 200 years of the evolution of the wedding gown paralleled with the social, economic and political status of the women they adorned. Over 50 gowns are featured, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to modern designers including Vera Wang, Yohji Yamamoto and Geoffrey Beene. The exhibition explores the modern bride as the centerpiece of an elaborate theatrical presentation and her wedding gown as an integral part of the spectacle.

*Force of Nature*, August 9, 2010 — May 22, 2011

Contemporary Japanese ceramics and Barbizon paintings seem, at first, to be an unlikely pair. While these paintings and ceramics hail from different time periods, geographic locations and artistic traditions, both collections look to nature as a force of inspiration and change. The artists who have created these works share a reverence for nature's metaphoric significance, power and beauty. Through subject, palette, composition and texture these works share a dialogue about man's relationship with and perception of the natural world.

**Miami University Art Museum, Oxford**

An NEA matching grant of \$10,000 was recently awarded to Miami University Art Museum to produce a series of commentaries about objects in the permanent collection. The purpose of the award is to combine traditional museum educational strategies and current social media trends. The project will result in a series of professionally produced audio/

visual art commentaries by students for their peers to be posted on our website, on Vimeo and on Facebook.

The Art Museum is looking forward to the first series of exhibitions curated by Jason Shaiman, our recently hired Curator of Exhibitions. Jason has explored our collections, met with Miami faculty and consulted collectors in the region to prepare a three-year plan for exhibitions drawn both from museum collections and targeted loans. Jason has significant experience in exhibition design, traveling exhibitions and teaching art history, and he has curated exhibitions in many different categories.

**Upcoming exhibitions:**

*Looking Beyond the Surface: Understanding Identity Through Art*, opens January 11, through July 23, 2011

This suite of three exhibitions, *Understanding Herself*, *Capturing Identity*, and *Defining Identity*, explores identity through both contemporary and historical perspectives. The concept of identity has been a topic of philosophical, psychological and social inquiry for thousands of years. Historical figures including Socrates, Plato, Freud and Jung are most commonly associated with the study of identity. Less often considered, but no less important, are painters, sculptors and photographers. It is through a study of art that a significant understanding of personal and cultural identity can be explored.

**Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland**  
**Exhibitions:**

*Kim Beom: Objects Being Taught They Are Nothing But Tools*, November 13, 2010—

March 6, 2011

The Cleveland Museum of Art presents the first solo museum exhibition in the United States of the work of Korean artist Kim Beom. The exhibition includes three new mixed-media installations and selections of drawings from 1994 to the present.

With an expressive vocabulary that relies on deadpan humor, absurdist enunciation, poetry, and childlike imagery, Kim investigates our perception of the world by bringing reality and imagination closer together. By referencing animistic notions by which artists ascribe a spiritual core to individual works, as well as 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-gardes that mined the human subconscious and practiced a kind of social awareness, Kim's work has developed around the visual tradition of illusionism. In particular, he inspires the viewer to come closer and become actively engaged—or even entangled—in the projection of images and thoughts.



*Wedding Dress: Bodice, Overskirt, Skirt, and Underskirt, 1869, United States, cotton; gift of Milton and Kathryn Graff, 2001.105a-d*

Fusing the position of artist and docent, and merging the art object with the larger social field, these works stand for how we invest art with meaning. This exhibition introduces the viewer to Kim's multifaceted work in a variety of media, as well as his continued reflection on Korean society and its recent history.

*Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, October 17, 2010–January 17, 2011

*Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* offers visitors a unique glimpse of the Middle Ages, a time when art mediated between heaven and earth and wondrous objects filled churches and monastic treasuries. Relics—the physical remains of holy men and women, and things associated with them—were especially important to the development of Christianity, which emerged as a powerful new religion in the Late Roman world. The exhibition explores how medieval artists expressed the sacred power of fragmented remains and considers the role that relics played in the development of the visual arts.



Bust Reliquary of St. Baudime, c. 1180–1200. Romanesque (French, Auvergne). Gilded bronze, gems, and enamel with a wood core; Puy-le-Dôme, Parish Church of Saint-Nectaire, Treasury.

*The Glory of the Painted Page: Manuscript Illuminations from the Permanent Collection*, November 6, 2010–March 27, 2011

The history of the book forms one of the chief categories of the material culture of medieval and Renaissance Europe. Its history spans at least a millennium, and for many of us today these handwritten, richly embellished works of art represent the quintessential form of medieval artistic expression. Their appeal is both intimate and timeless. The illuminated manuscript is undoubtedly the most tactile and recognizable of all such collectibles from this era.

This exhibition presents a selection of liturgical, academic, and biblical leaves from the museum's permanent collection. The exhibition complements *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, on view October 17, 2010–January 17, 2011

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## Wisconsin

Submitted by *Craig Hadley* ■

### Rock County Historical Society,

Janesville

#### Exhibition:

*Pickard China: An American Company with Local Roots*, until March 20, 2011

The Rock County Historical Society partnered with the Pickard Collectors Club, Ltd. to create the exhibit *Pickard China: An American Company with Local Roots*, which will be open through March 20, 2011. The company was founded by Wilder A. Pickard who started as a sales representative for the Pauline Pottery Company of Edgerton, Wisconsin. After Pauline Pottery closed, Pickard China started up and eventually moved to Chicago.

Pickard China porcelain features elaborate ornamentation, decorative gilding and handpainted realistic flora and fauna scenes. Pickard China is currently made in Antioch, Illinois and is the only remaining company still producing fine china in the United States. The china is used in U.S. embassies, Air Force One, Blair House, Camp David and the U.S. Military and is represented among the 475 pieces on display. The china from Air Force One, Blair House and the Sept 2009 G-20 Summit designed by Michelle Obama is not exhibited anywhere else in the world. The Pickard Collectors Club, Ltd. is seeking other museums in the Midwest to share the beauty and history of this fine china. Please contact the Rock County Historical Society for further information, <http://www.rchs.us/>

### Kenosha Public Museum, Kenosha

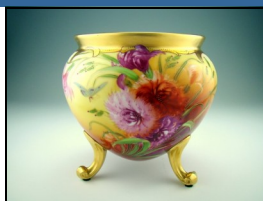
#### New temporary exhibitions:

*The Printing Making Revolution in America and the Wisconsin Presence*, through March 27, 2011

This exhibition examines 70 years of art by the country's leading printmakers. Experience the Renaissance of printmaking, from its founders to the Wisconsin studio printmakers and their successors, in the fight to establish printmaking as a positive force in contemporary American art. This exhibition features the collection of Ronald L. Ruble.

*Rembrandt: States, Fakes, & Restrikes*, December 4, 2010 — February 27, 2011

Enjoy this rare opportunity to view a private collection of 30 etchings created by Rembrandt in his lifetime, including first state pulls, various restrike editions from the 17<sup>th</sup> century



*A handpainted bowl in the Pickard China exhibit in Janesville.*

on, pieces from the Millennium Edition of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and copies of Rembrandt etchings made by other artists from the 18<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This exhibition is presented by Mathis Gallery and Conservation Framing, Racine, Wisconsin.

### Logan Museum of Anthropology, Beloit

#### *Transformation Through Renovation*

A grant of \$349,688 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) is being used to renovate three laboratory spaces within the Beloit College's department of anthropology and Logan Museum of Anthropology. Renovations will allow faculty, staff, students and visiting researchers to more closely and securely study museum collections. The labs are being upgraded with new casework, work stations, lighting, flooring, a fume extraction system and upgraded HVAC. Renovations began October 1 and are scheduled to be completed in January 2011 at the beginning of the spring semester. The NSF grant was awarded as part of a competitive, one-time program funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

If you're interested in following the progress of the NSF-funded renovations, follow us on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/LoganMuseum>

### Chazen Museum of Art, University of

Wisconsin, Madison

#### *Construction Update*

The stone cladding is hung on the museum addition! Construction of the bridge joining the two buildings is underway. The new building opens in October 2011, with double the gallery space, an auditorium for film and lectures, an art studio for classes and workshops, object study rooms and a larger museum shop.

#### Exhibition:

*Hidden Treasures: Illuminated Manuscripts from Midwestern Collections*, December 18, 2010 - February 27, 2011

Before the invention of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, books were handwritten on parchment and painted with brilliant pigments and gold leaf. Illuminated manuscripts represent the convergence of medieval bookmaking, the written word and art. This exhibition brings together approximately 40 manuscripts and single leaves, dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, lent by university libraries, museums and private collections in seven states.



*Illuminated manuscript in the Chazen's Hidden Treasures exhibit.*



# Celebrate Museums at Museumpalooza !

The Association of Midwest Museums (AMM) is pleased to announce that it will host the 2011 conference, *Museumpalooza: A Celebration of Cultural Tourism and Communities*. AMM will partner with both the Illinois Association of Museums (IAM) and the Visitors Studies Association (VSA) to present an exceptional conference experience. The conference is scheduled for **July 24-27, 2011** at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, Illinois and will feature an opening reception at the Art Institute of Chicago's Modern Wing. For a number of reasons, AMM has moved its annual conference from the traditional Fall period to the Summer. Primarily, the move will provide AMM members with fewer conflicts with other state, regional and national museum conferences. It will also provide participants with an opportunity to combine the conference with their vacation plans.

Once again, AMM has selected a distinctive property as the host venue for the 2011 AMM



Cloud Gate, better known as “the Bean” reflects the Chicago Skyline in Millennium Park along Michigan Avenue. Photo courtesy of the City of Chicago.

Conference. The Palmer House Hilton is a 25-story Beaux Arts style hotel that boasts a two-story, gilded lobby with a formal staircase, marble-topped tables, velvet seating and a ceiling mural depicting Greek mythology. Conveniently located in the heart of the Loop in downtown Chicago, The Palmer House Hilton is a beautiful, historic hotel that is within walking distance of the best attractions the city of Chicago has to offer, including the Millennium Park, Grant Park, Lake Michigan, the Art Institute of Chicago, the theater district and the Magnificent Mile.

“We’re thrilled to return to Chicago,” said AMM Executive Director Brian Bray. “It has been more than 15 years since we last held a conference in Chicago and it’s such a wonderful conference destination with so many outstanding museums.” In addition to outstanding sessions and inspiring speakers, the conference will also include receptions and tours at many of the cultural institutions in Chicago, including the Chicago History Museum, Adler Planetarium, Shedd Aquarium and the Museum of Science and Industry.

AMM hopes to see you in Chicago—save the dates, **July 24-27, 2011!**

## Collections Related Sessions At the 2010 AMM Conference:

- Conservation Connections: Building a Successful Conservation Program in a Small Museum
- Connecting to Conservation
- Risk Management: Collections Insurance - A Primer Revisited
- Managing Digitization: An Image Primer
- No Easy Answers: A NAGPRA Discussion
- Volunteers and Interns: Amazing Resources for “Little or No Money Down!”
- Strategies for Revitalizing a Historic House - With No Budget!

## MRC Travel Stipend Application

The Midwest Registrars Committee is offering travel stipends of \$750 for committee members to attend the Association of Midwest Museums annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois which will be held July 24-27, 2011.

Applicants must be voting members of the Midwest Registrars Committee and work in the Midwest region. Selections will be based on the materials submitted to the Travel Stipend Committee. The recipients will attend the MRC luncheon at AMM and will write one article each for the MRC Courier about a session at the annual meeting.

To apply, please complete the form below and attach the required additional information.

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Institution Name		
Street Address/P.O. Box		
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### Additional Information Required:

- \*Current resume
- \*Statement by applicant to include the following:
  1. A description of your professional duties
  2. Your involvement in and commitment to the profession
  3. What you hope to gain from attending the AMM annual meeting
- \*Two letters of recommendation (one from your direct supervisor)
- \*Statement of financial need, if applicable

**Application Deadline:** May 15, 2011

**Send applications to:** Karen O'Brien  
Museum of Anthropology  
University of Michigan  
1109 Geddes Ave.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079

**For questions, contact:** Karen O'Brien (Vice Chair, Midwest Registrars Committee)  
734-764-6299      karen@klobrien.net

## Rockin' good times at AMM 2010 in Cleveland

Submitted by Laura Henderson ■

Personally speaking, although all the AMM conferences I have attended have been excellent, I think Cleveland 2010 was up there as the best so far. The opening night was spectacular—not ONLY a private concert by Patti Smith, but also all the other events, the speakers, the sessions, the food, the ambiance and the locations. Kudos, Brian Bray and all the organizers!

The evening started at the Great Lakes Science Center and the *Steamship William G. Mather*, a retired bulk freighter and now a floating museum and a tribute to the heyday of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway trade routes. They call her “the steamship that built Cleveland.” She

was the flagship for the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company and was named in honor of the company president, William Gwinn Mather. She was idle for seven years until she was donated to the Great Lakes Historical Society in 1987. In 1995 the Harbor Heritage Society was founded and acquired the *S. S. Mather*, continuing the restoration work and negotiating with the city of Cleveland for a 40-year lease.

In September, 2005, the museum was moved from the East 9th Street Pier to Dock 32, closer to the Great Lakes Science Center and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In October 2006, the *S. S. William G. Mather* was acquired by the Great Lakes Science Center. Today the ship is a focal point for interpreting the relationship between technology, history, commerce and the environment.

We saw the captain's quarters, the first mate's room, guest quarters, kitchen, bathrooms, lounge,

pilot house,

cargo hold and engine room, as well as exhibitions on the lower deck and fabulous views of the city from the deck. We tried tying sailors' knots and read about the cargoes of ore, coal, stone and grain and the frequent stops at the steel mills.

Back in the Science Center we were treated to “shrimp shots,” chili, wine, local beer and other delectables and entertained by wild science people dressed in rainbow colored coats, performing experiments that would not be allowed in any other



*Top and above: Laura Henderson in front of The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame on a beautiful evening; the interior of the R&R Right: Katie Nelson strokes the belly of a 30-foot long python*





(Continued from page 17)

museum, such as making fog! There were animals, too—I learned that the skin on a 30-foot-long python is smooth, not scaly (but still scary).

After touring the exhibits and enjoying the hands-on displays, greeting old friends and making new ones, and taking countless photos, the group headed over to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the world's first museum dedicated to rock and roll. The architecture is breathtaking, designed by legendary architect I.M. Pei, who said, "...it's all about energy!" The museum opened in September, 1995 with a two-day celebration that included a parade, a ribbon-cutting, a private gala dinner and a benefit concert featuring all-time greats such as Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin and Johnny Cash.

The highlight of the evening, of course, was the high-energy, full concert (not just 3 or 4 songs!) that Patti Smith performed just for us. She looked suitably grungy in old, torn jeans, scruffy boots, a tie-dyed T-shirt, loose, stringy



hair and a black blazer with a big stain on the front. Perfect! She still puts on a great show, and she had an easy rapport with the audience. She did a guitar duel with Lenny Kaye that was classic, and she belted out all the songs we all wanted to hear. It was hard to wind down after that!

The evening event for the museums at University Circle was well planned and went smoothly except for one little glitch. Only two of the three buses showed up—but everyone just piled into the buses and never complained. All three museums put on a first-class event, with tasty, imaginative food and interesting tours. Everyone is anxiously awaiting the completion of the Museum of Art expansion. With almost 600,000 sq. ft. of space when finished, it might take three days to get through it!

The keynote speakers were inspiring. Marsha Semmel focused on four C's: critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, with regard to leadership. David Zach spoke at the Saturday luncheon, with a dramatic slideshow on his futurist view of trends and traditions. He had clever, unexpected and witty ways of getting his point across,

such as "start smoking" and "start drinking." Google him.

The sessions I attended this year dealt with the topics that are always relevant for collections managers and registrars, such as conservation, digital asset management, technology, risk management, and so on, but I also sat in on some discussions that are a little

outside my job description because they sounded so interesting. For instance, the session titled *Ohio Art Museum*

*Top: Ford Bell supporting AMM*  
*Above: Registrars tying the knot!*  
*Left: MRC members gathered for a group shot on the fore deck of the Steamship William G. Mather*

*Visitors: Are They All the Same?* peaked my curiosity and proved to be a lively exchange of information, ideas and experiences not only by the presenters but also by those of us attending. The results of a year-long study of the audiences at each museum, in Dayton, Columbus and Akron, were surprising to the organizers and gave them new insights into what

(Continued from page 18)

people wanted or expected from their museum experience.

The session on building a conservation program at Denison Museum was well presented and very informative, and the session by Steve Haller of Indiana Historical Society was a trip into technology and the amazing developments available for us to utilize. In spite of its undesirable time slot (8:30 a.m.!), the session *Risk Management: Collections Insurance* was a good review of the issues involved with claims and adequate insurance coverage.

The McGuffey Museum on the Miami University campus has recently been placed under the direction of the Art Museum, and I am now the collections manager for the objects in the house and the off-site storage facility. Therefore, the session about the Bedstemor's House presented by Angela Stanford and Tova Brandt of The Danish Immigrant Museum was informative and well worthwhile. There were many parallels to our situation.

The most relevant session to high priority issues at our museum was on digital asset management (DAM), presented as a double session on Saturday morning by Scott Hisey, Tamara Johnston, Nicolette Meister, Adam

LaPorta and Ann Sinfield. The discussion was clear and understandable and not full of the techie terms and concepts that cause the non-techie mind to close down. Their advice was sound and precise, and it all made sense. We have since purchased and installed a DAM system (yes, it's funny) called *Lightroom 3*, and we are able now to tether the camera to the computer to transfer the images directly into the DAM. The metadata can be entered immediately instead of going back to the image later, saving a lot of time and hassle.

I hope everyone who attended the Cleveland conference had an experience as positive as mine—the people I talked to about it all seemed to feel that way. As usual, the visuals, the networking, the sessions, the exhibitors and the good times all mixed together leave you energized and ready to roll (& rock!).



Top: The Steamship William G. Mather, now a museum  
Left: Dinner at Lola; l-r, Ida Tomlin, Jane Weinke, Devon Pyle-Vowles, Kathy Foley, Nicola Longford, Karen Witter, Laura Henderson—great food!  
Below: Museum scientists creating a nitrogen gas “fog” at the Great Lakes Science Center







*Below: Legendary rock star Patti Smith, suitably attired, performs on opening night at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame  
Left: David Zach, keynote speaker & Futurist  
Far left: Brian Bray and Alex Gates kicking back*



*Above: Kathy Foley and Nicola Longford (with glasses)  
Above: (l-r) Angela Stanford and Tova Brandt at their session "Revitalizing a Historic House Museum"  
Center: Great Lakes Science Center opening reception  
Below: Nicolette Meister*





## Reflections from a 'mid-career' professional on the museum field and her colleagues

In my time on the Courier, the course of my career has been anything but predictable or smooth.

In the past five years, I have had four different positions with four agencies. I know that I am not alone on the rollercoaster ride of the museum profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. While most of you have probably not changed positions this much, I have no doubt that many of you, without changing jobs have seen dramatic and sometimes traumatic changes in your duties and responsibilities. I have heard countless stories of jobs being merged and retiring co-workers not being replaced but the work must be done. And some, like me, have experienced stretches of unemployment or had to work out of the field due to funding cuts, downsizing or other forces beyond our control.

It is in many ways a dismal time for non-profits in general and museums specifically. While cuts in funding and staff have made it difficult to do essential tasks, it has also never been more important to do MORE and do it better than ever before. Serving existing audiences is no longer enough, museums all over the country have to justify their continued

existence, attract new supporters and develop new funding sources as competition for grants and foundation funds increases.

Dark times indeed, but there is a bright spot. Through all the ups and downs, despite low pay, overwork and organizational instability people still care. I know so many people who have taken on the work once done by two, three or more people. Curators who have taken over for registrars, registrars who end up planning, fabricating and installing exhibits and of course it seems EVERYONE these days has a role in development.

This happens in every field in the current economy – those with jobs do what they must to keep them. What I find inspiring with my museum colleagues however is their continued personal commitment to the field. They do what must be done not from fear of losing their job, but because they believe in what they do. Despite the hardships and uncertainty there is a strong awareness that their work matters and is important, not only for their museum, but for their community.

*Submitted by Michelle Hill ■*



## Join the Midwest Registrars Committee

### BENEFITS INCLUDE:

*The MRC newsletter **Courier**, membership and services directory, stipends for workshops and conferences, news on Association of Midwest Museums activities, access to materials from the Forms Exchange and Information Clearinghouse, and a network of associates who provide support and knowledge.*

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