Greetings from your Chairperson!

Welcome Rob DeHart (Tennessee State Museum, Nashville, TN) as the new editor for Update. I hope that each of you finds a few minutes to share what you are doing as curators in forthcoming issues.

For the first time I participated on the National Program Committee for AAM. In early October the committee recommended sessions for the Baltimore 2013 meeting from the pool of over 500 sessions proposals that were submitted online. This year was the first time that anyone could comment on the session proposals through the end of the summer. If you didn’t do so this year, please consider adding your voice next year.

Baltimore should be an interesting meeting with a variety of functional areas included. We had a larger representation of curatorial sessions than before but are very eager for more. To that end, we are pleased to have the CurCom Program Committee help move forward through the still transitioning submission and evaluation process. Continuing this year are co-chairs Ron Potvin (John Nicholas Brown Center, RI) and Elisa Phelps (History Colorado, CO), and Nathan Jones (The General Patton Museum of Leadership, KY). Keni Sturgeon (Willamette Heritage Center, OR) is joining the committee this year to help build networks in the northwest region for the Seattle 2014 meeting. She is the past chairperson of CARE and holds a curatorial position, among other responsibilities.

CurCom can help you with professional opportunities for Baltimore 2013. Do you want to:
- submit an application to the Excellence in Exhibition Competition?
  Ask Stacey Swigart (Please Touch Museum, PA) if you have questions.
- submit an application to the Excellence in Label Writing Competition?
  Ask John Russick (Chicago History Museum, IL) if you have questions.
- submit a fellowship application for Baltimore?
  Look for application instructions soon to appear on the AAM website and via a link through the CurCom website.

It’s not too early to start thinking about Seattle 2014. If you want help to develop a session idea, ask Ron Potvin, Elisa Phelps, Nathan Jones, or Keni Sturgeon about session proposal development.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy and safe holiday season. May we all weather the storms and offer help to our colleagues when it is needed.

Ellen Endslow
CurCom Chairperson
Thanks to all our contributors and writers for this issue of Update:

Trevor Jones, Kentucky Historical Society
Elizabeth Kunz Kollmann, Museum of Science, Boston
Andrea Michelbach, University of Wisconsin
From the Editor

I want to express how excited I am to be the new editor for CURCOM Update. As a member of CURCOM for almost 10 years, I have enjoyed this platform for collaboration and sharing of stories.

I must thank Deborah Tout-Smith for making the transition as painless as possible. It will take some time before I am as efficient as her, but she did her best sharing the template and providing valuable tips.

You may notice that this issue is a little on the “thin side,” no doubt from the extreme busyness of museum professionals and the unusually quick turn-around time for this issue. (Who knew there would be two pieces that involve Abraham Lincoln?) I plan to acquire much more for the spring issue and hope that you will help. Exciting acquisitions, programs, research, exhibitions—please send your stories my way!

Best wishes for a fantastic holiday season,

Rob DeHart
Tennessee State Museum
robert.dehart@tn.gov

Future AAM Annual Meetings

Baltimore, MD
May 19-22, 2013

Seattle, WA
May 18-21, 2014

Atlanta, GA
April 26-29, 2015

SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Update is the periodic newsletter distributed to members of CurCom. It is also available on-line at http://www.curcom.org

CurCom (Curators’ Committee) is a Professional Network (PN) committee of the American Alliance of Museums. All SPC members must join the AAM. Dues for CurCom ($20.00 / $10.00 for students) are payable in addition to AAM dues.

Membership is obtained through:

    Membership Department
    American Alliance of Museums
    1575 Eye St. N.W., Suite 400
    Washington, DC 20005

    Phone (202) 289 9132; fax (202) 289 6578;
    email membership@aam-us.org
Call for Entries
2013 Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition

Excellent exhibition labels are clear, concise, and captivating. This combination is not easily achieved, and the writers and editors who craft the best label copy often go unrecognized.

The Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition is designed to showcase examples of great label writing, identify innovative approaches, highlight best practices, and help us learn from one another. The competition cannot achieve this goal without a strong pool of entries.

Please submit examples of great label writing and encourage your colleagues to participate.

For more information, including guidelines and a link to the new online submission form, visit www.curcom.org/curcom_comp_labels.php

Submission Deadline: December 21, 2012

2012 Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition Winners

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
The DuSable Museum of African American History
The Jewish Museum
John G. Shedd Aquarium
Laogai Research Foundation Museum
Monterey Bay Aquarium
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
Art Gallery of Ontario (1)
Art Gallery of Ontario (2)
James A. Michener Art Museum
Lincoln Park Zoo
About the Competition
The Twenty-Fifth Annual Excellence in Exhibition Competition recognizes outstanding achievement in the exhibition format from all types of museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and any other types of non-commercial institutions offering exhibitions to the public. The competition is the joint project of the following American Alliance of Museums Professional Networks (PNs): the Curators Committee (CURCOM), the National Association for Museum Exhibition (NAME), the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE), and the Education Committee (EdCom). Each PN is represented by one competition judge who evaluates the submitted application materials against the Alliance’s Standards for Museum Exhibitions.

Eligibility
Any non-commercial institution offering exhibitions to the public may participate. Exhibitions may have been designed by a commercial firm for a non-commercial institution. Each institution that enters must have a team member that is a member of the Alliance. The exhibition must have opened to the public between November 30, 2010 and November 30, 2012. To be eligible, exhibitions may not have previously won this competition. Exhibitions may only be submitted once to the competition.

Entry Fees
A $75 fee is required for each exhibition entered. Make checks payable to the American Alliance of Museums / Excellence in Exhibition. For multiple entries, submit one check for the full amount.

Notification and Awards
Each winning exhibition will be featured in a program session at the 2013 the Alliance Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD and a representative from each winning institution will be asked to do a short presentation. Winners will also receive national recognition in the Alliance publication Museum

Competition Policies
The PN sponsors are not responsible for lost or damaged entries. All entry materials become the property of the PNs and cannot be returned. Entrants agree to allow the Alliance and PN sponsors to use photographs of winning exhibitions, at no charge, in Alliance publications. Entrants warrant that they have the right to allow such use. Institutions will be credited in any published reference to winning entries. All materials (including the exhibition budget) will be displayed during the Marketplace of Ideas at the 2013 Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD.

To Enter:
Submit one copy of each entry on CD-ROM and one copy in print format. Label the CD with the name of the institution and exhibition. To facilitate judging, please include each component in the order listed below in a single PDF document excluding the exhibition walk-through PowerPoint, which should be a separate file. Please confine your answers to the word limits as indicated. The documents referenced in the application requirements (Entry Form, Standards for Museum Exhibitions, and Exhibition Budget Worksheet) may be found online at http://name-aam.org, www.edcom.org, www.curcom.org, www.care-aam.org, or obtained from the competition coordinator (Liz Kollmann, ekollmann@mos.org).

1. Entry Form
2. Institutional Profile: (500 words) Provide general information about your institution. This may include annual number of visitors, number of employees, a description of collections, titles of permanent exhibitions, number of special

Continued on page 6
exhibitions opened annually, square footage of exhibition galleries, and/or other information relevant to your project.

3. Narrative: (3500 words maximum) The Alliance Council of Professional Networks has updated *Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence*. They can be found on the NAME website. For each of the seven standards in the updated document, provide a narrative in 500 words or less describing how your exhibition reflects each of these standards, using specific examples, and why it represents excellence.

4. Public Programs: (500 words) Describe the programs for school and/or public audiences including digital media, if appropriate, that were developed to accompany the exhibition, and explain how these worked in tandem with the exhibition’s goals.

5. Exhibition Staff: (500 words) List key in-house and contracted staff and describe their roles in the exhibition planning process.

6. Exhibition Budget Worksheet: Only final exhibition budgets submitted in this format (see next page) will be accepted.

7. Labels: Include the introductory label (as you define it) and up to five additional labels that best communicate the look, feel, and content of the exhibition. Labels should be presented in graphic form as they appear in the exhibition, not just as text.

8. Floor Plan: A single sheet keyed to the exhibition walkthrough. Include square footage and scale.

9. Exhibition Walkthrough: In a PowerPoint document containing up to 20 images, provide a visual walkthrough of the exhibition. Each image should be clearly keyed to the exhibition floor plan. Include a 2-3 sentence explanation for each image in the PowerPoint notes. The purpose of the images is to give a sense of the exhibition as a whole. We strongly encourage you to submit images of the public interacting with your exhibition if possible.

Entries must be postmarked by **January 29, 2013**

Send to:
Elizabeth Kunz Kollmann
Senior Research and Evaluation Associate
Research and Evaluation Department
Museum of Science, Boston
1 Science Park
Boston, MA 02114
ekollmann@mos.org

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**Your input needed:**

**January Professional Network Council Meeting**

What key curatorial issues do you want addressed at AAM national meetings? It’s not too early to be thinking about Seattle 2014.

Contact Ellen Endslow, CURCOM Chair, by early January 2013 with your ideas—eendslow@chestercohistorical.org

Registration now open for Baltimore 2013!

To register visit:
http://www.aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting
Listen for the Watch in *Lincoln*!

Trevor Jones, Director, Museum Collections & Exhibitions, Kentucky Historical Society

If you go to Steven Spielberg’s *Lincoln* starring Daniel Day-Lewis, you’ll hear the sound of Abraham Lincoln’s actual watch! The Kentucky Historical Society allowed legendary sound designer (Academy Awards for Star Wars, E.T. and Raiders of the Lost Ark among others) to record the sound of a pocket watch that belonged to Abraham Lincoln for the film. Spielberg and Burtt were obsessed with making the film as accurate as possible and wanted to use the sound of a watch that Lincoln actually heard!

Here’s the link to the watch: [http://kyhistory.pastperfect-online.com/35577cgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=841F23C8-455F-4120-A740-435610329200;type=101](http://kyhistory.pastperfect-online.com/35577cgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=841F23C8-455F-4120-A740-435610329200;type=101)

If you want to hear the watch as well, visit us in Frankfort where you can see the watch and listen to a recording of it ticking!

Lincoln’s pocket watch ready for recording with a very small microphone carefully and temporarily attached!
The Tennessee State Museum will be the only stop in the Southeast of an unprecedented tour and display of the Emancipation Proclamation, the document that altered the course of U.S. history and dramatically changed the lives of African-Americans by proclaiming freedom for millions of slaves.

The fragile manuscript signed by Pres. Abraham Lincoln in 1863 can only be exposed to light for 72 hours while in Tennessee. The document will be displayed at intervals during a to-be-determined six-day period in 2013 marking the 150th anniversary of its signing.

The tour of the historic decree, which rarely leaves the National Archives in Washington D.C., is taking place in conjunction with the acclaimed National Archives multimedia exhibit Discovering the Civil War, which will open at the state museum on Feb. 12, 2013 – Lincoln’s birthday – and continue through Sept. 2, 2013.

The Emancipation Proclamation linked the preservation of American constitutional government to the end of slavery and has become one of the country’s most treasured documents. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, formally proclaiming the freedom of all slaves held in areas still in revolt.

Ironically, because Tennessee was considered occupied territory by 1863 and not formally “in revolt,” the decree did not change the status of the state’s slaves. Many still left their owners and joined United States Colored Troop regiments or worked in labor [contraband] camps for the Federal Army. It was not until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution did slavery cease to exist in Tennessee.

The Discovering the Civil War exhibit, which will continue well beyond the Emancipation Proclamation’s six day viewing, is the culmination of 150 years of analysis, interpretation, and opinion on the Civil War through lesser-known stories and perspectives, and previously unseen documents.

“Discovering the Civil War is a fresh, interactive exploration of a well known historic chapter, piecing together original letters, diaries, photos, maps, petitions, receipts, patents, amendments and proclamations to portray the Civil War through a vibrant multimedia experience,” said Lois Riggins-Ezzell, Executive Director of the Tennessee State Museum. “The unique approach of the exhibit and the great relevance of the National Archives make it all the more gratifying that Nashville has been chosen as the sole southeastern city located in the heart of the former Confederacy for an installation.”

The exhibit will feature 12 themed sections that combine original treasures enhanced by interactive features and social media tools, allowing visitors to see the past through the lens of the future. Diverse themes of Discovering the Civil War include, “Spies and Conspiracies,” “Prisoners and Casualties,” “Emancipation,” “Global War,” and “Raising Armies.”
The Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities announces two open positions for program officers. For one position the Endowment seeks candidates with knowledge of issues and trends in public history and experience in a museum, historical society, historical site, or other non-profit cultural organization. For the second position the ideal candidate would have a graduate degree in a field other than U.S. history and professional experience in humanities-related public programming that includes one or more of the following: teaching, administrative experience, experience in grant-making activities, experience in educational or cultural institutions, and K-12 classroom curriculum resources.

For both positions an M.A. or Ph.D. degree in a humanities discipline is preferred. The announcements can be found at:
VA# 13-004 (Museum background)
https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/330943200
VA# 13-005 (excluding U.S. History)
https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/331042000

Application Deadline– December 19, 2012

NEH is an independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities.

The Division of Public Programs fosters public understanding and appreciation of the humanities by supporting projects that bring significant insights of humanities disciplines to general audiences through interpretive exhibitions, radio and television productions, lectures, symposia, printed materials, and reading and discussion groups.

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Mark your Calendars for Museums Advocacy Day

**Museums Advocacy Day 2013**
**Feb. 25-26, Washington DC**
Over 80 new members will be part of the 113th Congress convening in January 2013.

*Will they vote to support museums?*
Join us for Museums Advocacy Day 2013 and help make the case that museums are essential—as education providers and economic drivers—in every community. If museums are not at the table, they could be on the table.

**Registration** is now open at http://www.aam-us.org/advocacy/museums-advocacy-day/register

*What is Museums Advocacy Day?*
- Stand side-by-side with fellow advocates from your state and congressional district
- Get valuable information from Capitol Hill and policy experts about how to engage your representatives and make the case for museums
- Share a powerful message with your members of Congress and their staff about how your museum is essential
- Learn strategies for meeting with elected officials and the stats you need to make your case

*Attend an evening reception and Congressional Kick-Off Breakfast with members of Congress and staff.*
The Alliance and AASLH Sign Statement of Collaboration Around Standards and Excellence Programs

An agreement of collaboration recently signed by the American Alliance of Museums and the American Association for State and Local History connects the two organizations’ respective excellence programs and standards, including the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs), the Museum Assessment Program (MAP), and the Accreditation program.

“A widely recognized, credible universal commitment to high standards and best practices is essential to forging a truly unified, impactful museum field. It will also help us better connect with governments, foundations, corporations and the public,” said Alliance President Ford W. Bell.

“AASLH is very excited about the alignment being developed between its StEPs program and AAM’s MAP and, eventually, Accreditation programs” said Terry Davis, AASLH President & CEO. “Both organizations are committed to increasing the awareness of national museum standards and helping museums of all sizes to begin meeting those standards. Our two organizations work in concert on advocacy issues, and I’m delighted to add standards as yet another area of collaboration.”

The agreement is a key element in the Continuum of Excellence—a collaborative, inclusive, and accessible framework of standards-based programs and resources from across the field that supports, motivates, and recognizes museums in their efforts to professionalize and operate according to standards and best practices.

Currently, history museums and historic sites account for 22 percent of accredited museums and about 40 percent of MAP participants. StEPs boasts 410 museum enrollees. Until now museums were not able to build on what they’d already accomplished from one program to the next. For example, the agreement enables StEPs participants that have achieved all of the “Basic” performance indicators and at least 50% of the “Good” in each of its six program sections to have a streamlined self-assessment portion of the MAP process, paring it down by about 50%.

This agreement is also integral to the ongoing re-invention of the Alliance accreditation program—to make it more accessible and relevant to museums of all types and sizes. AASLH and the Alliance will begin exploring a StEPs-Accreditation streamlining and building-block approach similar to that devised for MAP; and creating opportunities for AASLH to inform and customize the accreditation self-study to make it more relevant to history organizations, as well as to shape representation of the history field perspective on the Accreditation Commission.

For more information on the Continuum of Excellence, Accreditation and MAP visit, www.aam-us.org. To learn more about AASLH and its StEPs program, visit www.aaslh.org.
InterActivity 2013
Children’s Museum
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania
April 30-May 7, 2013

Join us, the Association of Children’s Museums and the Children’s Museum Pittsburgh, for a panoramic exploration of what it means to experience a children’s museum in the 21st century. InterActivity 2013 will be a reimagining of the conference itself.

Register for InterActivity 2013 during Early Bird, December 1, 2012-March 1, 2013, and save at least $100 off the cost of onsite registration!

Locally Grown, Community Created
Association of Mid-West Museums
July 14-17, 2013
Contact info@midwestmuseums.org for information

Building the Museum Community: Inside, Outside, All Around the Town
Mountain-Plains Museum Association
Lincoln, Nebraska
September 29-Oct 3, 2013
www.mpma.net/2013MPMAConference.htm

Session proposals will be accepted until January 11, 2013. Visit the above website for more information.

Drive On! Museums and the Future
Western Museums Association
Salt Lake City, Utah
October 9-13, 2013
www.westmuse.org/conferences/2013_salt_lake_city.html

For information on session proposals, visit the above website.

Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association National Conference
Washington, D.C.
March 27-30, 2013
http://pcaaca.org/national-conference-2/

The individuals who comprise the PCA/ACA are a group of scholars and enthusiasts who study popular culture. The PCA/ACA offers a venue to come together and share ideas and interests about the field or about a particular subject within the field. It also provides publication opportunities and sponsors the PCA/ACA Endowment.

Beyond Disciplinarity: Interventions in Cultural Studies and the Arts
Columbia College
Chicago, Illinois
May 23-26, 2013
www.culturalstudiesassociation.org/conference-page

The Cultural Studies Association (CSA) invites participation in its eleventh annual conference. The theme of this year’s conference, Beyond Disciplinarity: Interventions in Cultural Studies and the Arts, encourages submissions that reflect on the nature, limits, and merits of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary practices across the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. This theme refers to the historic role of cultural studies as a field that intervenes in social and intellectual modes of disciplinarity from a variety of critical locations. The conference aims to attract work that meets those challenges by willfully reorganizing and redistributing the sensibilities and knowledges of disciplinary and interdisciplinary formations.

‘Superheros: The Extraordinary Power of Small Museums’
Small Museum Association 29th Annual Conference
Ocean City, Maryland
February 17-29, 2013
http://www.smallmuseum.org/conference.html

The SMA conference attracts more than 200 museum professionals every year from a wide variety of small museums. Sessions topics range from collections and education to staffing and board issues, plenty of informal networking opportunities for you to talk with (and get ideas from!) small museum professionals and volunteers.

23rd General Conference, International Council of Museums
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
August 10-17, 2013
http://icom.museum/where-we-work/events/general-conference/icom-rio-2013.html

Some 3,000 to 4,000 international participants are expected at this crucial event for ICOM. It provides a platform for museum professionals from different nations, regions, and cultures across the world to share and exchange on their expertise and experience.

In 2009, ICOM members confirmed their confidence in Brazil by selecting Rio de Janeiro as the location of the General Conference in 2013 and look forward to discovering and exploring the cultural delights the city, its surroundings and Brazil as a whole have to offer.