

Reports from the 1988 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Museums

The AAM Meeting in Pittsburgh was packed with visitor-related activities. The following reports summarize the activities of the Evaluation and Research Committee, the Education Committee, and the Public Relations Committee.

Report from the Evaluation and Research Committee

Harris Shettel

The recent AAM annual meeting in Pittsburgh was a busy time for the Evaluation and Research Committee. Our activities began with the traditional breakfast business meeting (without the breakfast) which was attended by over 25 members. Perhaps the most important outcome of that meeting was the approval of a change in the by-laws to stagger the election of the Chairperson (odd years) and the other officers (even years). Consistent with that change, we had nominations for a new Vice-chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. The latter two incumbents, D. D. Hilke and Jeff Bonner, were elected to a term of two more years. Jeff Hayward was elected to the office of vice-chairperson, replacing George Hein. The current Chairperson, Harris Shettel, agreed to serve one more year, when elections will be held for that office in New Orleans.

Program-wise, the Committee made a very good showing, thanks to the work of the Program Planning Sub-committee headed by Barbara Birney and D. D. Hilke. In all, five sessions were sponsored or co-sponsored by the Committee:

- Museum Visitor Learning: A Look at the Evidence [D. D. Hilke, chair].
- Museum/University Cooperation in Evaluation: A Case Study [Harris Shettel, chair].
- Conducting Formative Exhibit Evaluation [Mary S. Korenic, chair].
- Evaluation as a Creative Tool in Museum Media [Thomas Newman, chair].
- Conducting Quality Visitor Research: On-Site and Behind The Scenes [C. W. Eliot Paine, chair].

Each of these sessions was well attended and generated considerable post-paper discussion. In addition, Mary Ellen Munley organized another very successful poster session, Current Trends in Audience Research, as part of the Monday afternoon Market Place of Ideas. There were nine presenters and, judging by the crowd that was packing the room, they each had something worthwhile to present!

Finally, the Committee took another step toward its recognition as a Standing Professional Committee by obtaining over 270 names on the AAM petition form. (Only 100 are required by the AAM!) If all goes well, the Committee may have something to celebrate in New Orleans next year.

Finally, finally, if you would like to become a member of the Evaluation and Research Committee for 1988/89, you may do so by sending a check for \$5.00, payable to the AAM Evaluation and Research Committee, to:

D. D. Hilke
Audience Research Specialist
MBB66
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560

The more members we have, the stronger will be our petition to the AAM! □

Report from the Education Committee

Minda Borun

The following summarizes the activities of the business meeting of the Education Committee. Amendments to the Committee by-laws (mailed to members) were discussed and passed. The work of the task force on Ethics for Museum Educators was discussed. This topic will be a major concern at the regional meetings. The progress of the membership directory was mentioned and all urged to fill out their questionnaires. It was voted to increase committee dues to \$10.00 per year to cover expenses. Three petitions were circulated; one to nominate Sally Duensing for Counsellor-At-Large and the other two to support standing committee status for other committees. It was announced that the Research and Evaluation Committee was interested in planning a luncheon for next year's AAM meeting so that Educators and Evaluators could discuss issues of mutual concern. The concensus of the group was in favor of this plan. The group then divided up into regional groups and spent the remainder of the session discussing plans for the regional meetings.

The Education committee sponsored or co-sponsored the following sessions at the Conference:

- Making the Ideal Real: Implementing the Team Approach to Exhibition Development [Theresa LaMaster, chair].
- Curators' and Educators' Dialogue [Marsha Gallagher & Patterson B. Williams, chairs].
- Good PR Begins at Your Own Front Door – The Importance of Hospitality in the Museum [Marianne Bez, chair].

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- The Aesthetics of Agitation: Art in Public Places [Vicky Clark & Ellen Broderick, chairs].
- Reaching Out to Novice Visitors: A Workshop on the Getty/NEA Interpretive Project [Melora McDermott, chair].
- Education Marketplace [Judith A. Bobenage, chair].
- Mister Rogers Visits the Carnegie [Bay Hallowell Judson & Diane Schmitt, chairs]. □

Public Relations

Sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by the Public Relations Committee:

- Sound Ideas: Ratio and Audio Products in Museum Marketing [Marc Breslav & Sherry L. Devries, chairs].
- Public Relations Workshop [Becky Barefoot, chair].
- Museum Consortia: The Power of A Cooperative Effort [Deane L. Root, chair].
- Good PR Begins at your Own Front Door – The Importance of Hospitality in the Museum [Marianne Bez, chair].
- The Ultimate Nonprint Medium: Word-of-Mouth Communication [Al Kochka, chair].
- Communications Marketplace [Sharon Chaplock & Suzanne Hall, chairs].
- Partners in Promotion: How Cities and Museums Both Benefit [Jane Brown, chair]. □

Committee on Exhibition (NAME)

Sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by NAME:

- Designing Exhibitions for Multiple Frames of Mind [Constance B. Fuller, chair].
- Designing Exhibit Areas That Work: Art, Science, and History Museums [Lee Scott Theisen, chair].
- On the Bias: Anatomy of a Costume Exhibition [Dextra Frankel, chair].
- "Dr. Dimension and the Rulers of the Universe": The Anatomy of an Interactive Exhibition [Kathleen McLean, chair].
- Turn, Wind, Flip, Crank ... Is It Enough? [Robert Bullock, chair].
- Getting It Drawn and Built [James Volkert, chair].
- We the People – An NEH Success Story? [Marsha Semmel, chair].
- Design and Conservation: Conflict and Collaboration [Eugene B. Bergmann, chair].
- Museum Architecture: Monumental or Functional? [George S. Garnder, chair]. □

Other Sessions of Possible Interest

- From the Inside Out: Disabled Museum Professionals Talk to their Peers about Museums and Disabilities [Scott Alan Sheidlower, chair].

- In Step with "The New Vulgarly" – Just How Far Do We Go? [Sanford Sivitz Shaman, chair].
- Issues of Teaching and Learning: Teaching with Objects [Mark D. Kesling, chair].
- The Evolution of Science Museums: The Past, Present, and Future of Exhibit Design [Eleanor Kay Davis, chair].
- Hands-on and More: Strategies for Reaching New Audiences [Mary Worthington, chair].
- Exhibits Produced by Volunteer Committees [Betty Jane Johnson, chair].
- Afterschool Audience Development: Balancing the Social Needs of Children and the Educational Needs of the Museum [Wendy Aibel-Weiss, chair].
- Strategies for Developing New Audiences: A Case Study of the Studio Museum in Harlem [Kinshasha Holman, chair].
- Active Interpretation: Community and Museum Interaction Through Living History and Community Festivals [Lorraine Couture-Brunette, chair].
- New Strategies for Serving People Under the Bridge: Minorities, People With Disabilities, and Women [Treopia G. Washington, chair].
- Architecture for Art's Sake: A Field Evaluation Package [Vivian Loftness, chair].
- Improving Visitor Orientation [Philip Spiess, chair]. □

American Association of Museums offers audio tapes of these sessions. For further information write or call:

American Association of Museums
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Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 289-1818

Visitor Studies – 1988: Theory, Research, and Practice

Edited by
Stephen Bitgood, J. T. Roper, Jr. & Arlene Benefied

The Proceedings of the First Annual Visitor Studies Conference will be available in late August or early September. Sample abstracts of the contents of this publication can be found on pages 9, 10, and 12 of this issue.

To order send a check for \$12.00 plus \$2.50 for mailing and handling to:

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