Howdy from your Chairperson!

In my first missive as Chairperson of CurCom I promised you that I would spend my term addressing the most pressing curatorial concerns in the field. To accomplish that goal I need your help. Over the past few months the CurCom board and AAM staff have discussed ways to provide more professional development programming.

A couple of years ago CurCom surveyed its members to determine how we can best fulfill your professional development needs. One of the topics most requested was label writing. Hence, in September, CurCom organized another label writing webinar which was very well attended. The feedback from the evaluations was quite positive and several ideas emerged for future webinars.

Here's where you come in: we know which topics you want more information about, but we don't know which delivery methods you prefer. Luckily, AAM has developed a number of platforms:

- Webinars or online conferences/series (or other online platforms)
- In-person workshops, seminars or Annual Meeting sessions
- Blended learning (online and in-person)
- Short video (or audio) programs delivered via YouTube (or iTunes)
- Online Resources via AAM Resource Library (e.g. tip sheets, white papers, newsletters)
- Print Resources (via Museum magazine or other AAM publication)

Let your voice be heard! Email me at wjamesburns@email.arizona.edu and let me know how you want programming to be delivered. We want to bring you the most useful professional development opportunities throughout the year.

For those of you able to attend the annual meeting, the 2016 program is promising for curators. Ellen Endslow, who represented us at the national program committee, noted many excellent proposals that will ensure a stronger CurCom presence at this annual meeting. The official preliminary program is being prepared and will soon be released, with a significant curatorial session track. Watch for that in your inbox.

*continued on page 2*
Chairperson’s remarks, continued

Lastly, we are still planning a series of coordinated meet-ups or watch-and-chats about the curatorial core competencies document published last spring. Watch for information about the “core competencies convenings” in the coming months.

James Burns
CurCom Chairperson
Director, University of Arizona Museum of Art

Editor’s Note

As you may have noticed, we’re augmenting the editorial calendar of Update. This past July we asked for submissions from curators who are currently working with issues of American identity. That content will be pushed back to March, closer to the Annual Meeting. In the coming weeks, I’d like to hear especially from CurCom members who might also be part of ATALM, the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums. We’ll continue the discussion in March, and then in Washington, D.C.

This year’s meeting theme (page 6) should make a great backdrop for the kind of meaningful dialog that AAM strives to foster among its members and across national borders. To that point, Ellen Endslow’s account (page 4) illustrates how one AAM fellowship paved the way for international collaboration between Chester County Historical Society and the Hunan Provincial Museum.

How might the Annual Meeting benefit your institution? Your career? If you haven’t already, it’s not too late to snap up early bird registration and hotel pricing.

Tessa Shultz
Call for nominations: two great ways to recognize excellence!

**Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition**  
Submission deadline: December 13, 2015  
Questions to: labelcmp@uw.edu  
Submit to the competition

The annual Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition is sponsored by the American Alliance of Museum’s Curators Committee (CurCom) in cooperation with EdCom and NAME and in partnership with the Museology Graduate Program at the University of Washington, Seattle.

By highlighting the remarkable work of label writers and editors, the competition seeks to champion high quality label writing and inspire museum professionals to produce their very best work. Each year, selected exhibition labels are featured at the Marketplace of Ideas during the AAM annual meeting and in the competition’s online archive. The goal is to serve as a resource for museum professionals striving to write excellent label copy.

Our panel for the 2016 competition includes Joy Bivins (CurCom), Adam Tessier (NAME), Eileen Campbell (EdCom) and Kat Talley-Jones, whose label for Death Trap for Killers was honored in the 2015 competition.

**Excellence in Exhibitions**  
Submission deadline: January 29, 2016  
Questions to: sswigart@pleasetouchmuseum.org  
Submit to the competition

The 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 noncommercial institutions offering exhibitions to the public.

Each winning exhibition will be featured in a program session at the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting in Washington, DC and a representative from each winning institution will be asked to do a short presentation. Winner(s) will also receive national recognition in Museum magazine as well as in the Fall issue of Exhibitionist.

The competition is the joint project of the following Alliance Professional Networks (PNs): Curators Committee (CurCom), the National Association for Museum Exhibition (NAME), the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE) and the Education Committee (EdCom).
AAM Fellowships Have an Impact

By Ellen Endslove
Director of Collections/Curator
Chester County Historical Society

Part of the benefit of the AAM fellowship program is the mentoring component. Fellowship recipients, typically first time participants, are paired with AAM members who are regular attendees. Here is one example of how the fellowships make a difference to the profession.

Bin Wu, an international graduate student at the University of the Arts (UArts) in Philadelphia, was an AAM fellowship recipient for the 2014 Annual Meeting in Seattle. As Director of Collections/Curator at Chester County Historical Society (CCHS), West Chester, PA I was designated as her mentor. It turned out to be an important partnership.

Bin’s enthusiasm for museums and for museum professional training led her to visit me at CCHS, west of Philadelphia, after the conference. She interviewed CCHS museum, library, photo archives, education and development staff about how the organization works. These conversations became part of her graduate thesis, along with information from other museums.

That might have been the end of an interesting conversation except that Bin Wu took it a step farther. For the past year, she has worked in the UArts International Museum Studies Residency Program. She went back to China with UArts Interim Provost Jim Savoie to help launch a museum professional training program with the Hunan Provincial Museum.

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AAM Fellowships, continued

In October 2015, CCHS was pleased to host three senior staff members of the Hunan Provincial Museum (one of the eight national museums in China) who are involved in this new program. Deputy Director Mr. Duan Xiaoming, Curator of Ceramics Section Mr. Fang Zhaoyuan, and Vice Head of Museum Institute Ms. Li Huijun received a comprehensive behind-the-scenes tour. These lively conversations and the connection to objects reconfirmed the importance of our shared material culture and the value of interactions with our international colleagues.

If you have never attended an AAM Annual Meeting or haven't done so for more than three years, consider applying for a fellowship: http://aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting/register-fall/fellowships
If you are a regular Annual Meeting attendee, reach out to the AAM staff if you would like to be a mentor.

To learn more about UArts, see: http://www.uarts.edu/.
To learn more about CCHS see: http://www.chestercohistorical.org/.

Ellen Endslow is the Immediate Past Chair of CurCom. With more than 20 years’ experience as a curator, she is responsible for the care, interpretation of and access to the Chester County Historical Society’s collection of 80,000 objects. She participates in collections management, exhibition development and public outreach.
2016 Annual Meeting Theme: Power, Influence and Responsibility

Voltaire wrote, “With great power comes great responsibility.” Join us in our nation’s capital at the American Alliance of Museums 2016 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo to explore how the themes of power, influence and responsibility shape the work of museums in the U.S. and around the world.

New Curatorial Session Track

Focus:
Addresses fundraising and membership-related issues including: making the case; donor relations; government relations; grants; campaigns; endowments; special events; sponsorships; membership dues and structures; admissions; direct mail; and legal and tax issues (e.g., charitable giving incentives).

Intended Audience:
Development and fundraising staff, membership staff, business development and staff that participate in fundraising activities

For full details on all Annual Meeting session tracks see: http://www.aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting/tracks

Important Dates

Early January  Meeting Program & events Schedule Online
Event Tickets Available for Purchase

March 7  Early Bird Registration Deadline

April 29  Advance registration Deadline
Event Ticket Sales Close
Housing Registration Deadline
Cancellation Deadline

May 26-29  2016 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo
Washington, D.C.
See you at Anderson House

At the 2016 Annual Meeting, CurCom is pleased to be hosting an evening event at The Society of the Cincinnati. Located along Embassy Row in the heart of historic Dupont Circle, the Society is the nation's oldest patriotic organization. Now a nonprofit devoted to the appreciation of American independence, the Society maintains its headquarters, a library, and the historic Anderson House mansion in Washington D.C.

To the Andersons, their Washington home represented the culmination of what America's founders, including George Washington, hoped their capital city would become—a grand, modern city to rival European capitals, but with a patriotic identity and a sense of history that would make it distinctly American. During the Washington social season—generally between New Year's Day and Easter—the Andersons held diplomatic and inaugural receptions, formal dinners and luncheons, concerts, and dramatic performances. Their guest lists included Presidents William H. Taft and Calvin Coolidge, Gen. John J. Pershing, Henry A. du Pont, and members of the Vanderbilt family. What better place to network with colleagues and make new connections?

Check back in early January for tickets:
http://aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting/events

View of the Anderson House Winter garden. Courtesy: http://societyofthecincinnati.org/anderson_house/tour
Officers (2012-2015)

Chair
James Burns, University of Arizona Museum of Art
wjburns@email.arizona.edu

Vice Chair
Cindy Olsen, Curatorial Consultant
cmolsen@gmail.com

Immediate Past Chair
Ellen Endslow, Chester County Historical Society
eendslow@chesterhistorical.org

Secretary
Stacey Swigart, Please Touch Museum
sswigart@pleasetouchmuseum.org

Board Members-at-Large
Stephanie Gaub Antequino, Planet Hollywood
santequino@planethollywoodintl.com

David Kennedy, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center
dkennedy@OKhistory.org

Elisa Phelps, History Colorado
elisa.phelps@state.co.us

Regional representatives

Association of Midwest Museums (AMM)
Angela Goebel-Bain, Illinois State Museum
agb@museum.state.il.us
Cindy Olsen (see vice chair)

Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM)
Debra Hughes, Hagley Museum and Library
dhughes@hagley.org
Elizabeth Varner, U.S. Dept. of the Interior Museum Program
elizabeth.c.varner@gmail.com

Mountain-Plains Museums Association (MPMA)
Elisa Phelps (see board members-at-large)
David Kennedy (see board members-at-large)

New England Museums Association (NEMA)
Bonnie Stacy, Martha’s Vineyard Museum
bstacy@mvmuseum.org
Sheila K. Hoffman, Université du Québec à Montréal
sheila.hoffman@gmail.com

Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC)
Denise Drury, Western Carolina University Fine Art Museum
ddrury@email.wcu.edu
Nicole M. Suarez, Airborne and Special Operations Museum
nicole.m.suarez2.civ@mail.mil
Western Museums Association (WMA)
Redmond J. Barnett, Washington State Historical Society
redmond.barnett@wschs.wa.gov
Amy Scott, Autry National Center
ascott@theautry.org

Appointments and committee chairpersons

AIC Liaison (open)

AAM Liaison (open)

Archivist (open)

Ethics Committee 2012
Sheila Hoffman (chair, see NEMA rep)
James Burns (see chair)
Nathan C. Jones, The General Patton Museum of Leadership
nathan.c.jones.civ@mail.mil

Brian Peterson
brianhpetersen88@icloud.com
Elizabeth Varner (see MAAM rep)

2016 Exhibition Competition Judge (open)

2015-16 Label Writing Competition
John Russick (chair), Chicago History Museum
russick@chicagohistory.org

Membership Committee
Stephanie Antequino (see SEMC rep)

2014 Nominating Committee
James A. Hoobler, Tennessee State Museum
jim.hoobler@state.tn.us

Program Committee 2016
Ellen Endslow (see immediate past chair)
Keni Sturgeon, Science & Education at Pacific Science Center
ksturgeon@pacsci.org
Elisa Phelps (see board members-at-large)
Ron M. Potvin, John Nicholas Brown Center
ronald_potvin@brown.edu

Social Media Committee
Allison Cywin, University of Massachusetts
allison.j.cywin@umassd.edu

Social Media Committee Members
Stacey Swigart (see secretary)

Exhibition Coordinator 2013-15
Stacey Swigart (see secretary)

National Program Committee (open)

Newsletter Editor
Tessa Shultz
curcomeditor@aam-us.org

Curators’ professional network of AAM

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CurCom Update is always seeking curators who would like to write about their recent or upcoming projects. Email CurComEditor@aam-us.org for more information. Your colleagues want to hear from you!