

Council for Museum Anthropology 2011 Annual Report

Submitted by:

Alex W Barker (barkeraw@missouri.edu)

I. Section Officers

Position: President

Name: Alex W Barker

Email: barkeraw@missouri.edu

Position: President-Elect

Name: Howard Morphy

Email: Howard.Morphy@anu.edu.au

Position: Treasurer

Name: Karl Hoerig

Email: khoerig@fortapachearizona.org

Position: Secretary

Name: Margaret M. Bruchac

Email: margaret.bruchac@uconn.edu

Position: Board Member

Name: Kathleen M. Adams

Email: kadams@luc.edu

Position: Board Member

Name: Jennifer Kramer

Email: jennifer.kramer@ubc.ca

Position: Board Member

Name: Morgan B. Perkins

Email: perkinmb@potdam.edu

Position: Board Member

Name: Gwyneira Isaac

Email: isaacg@si.edu

Position: Board Member

Name: Trudy Nicks

Email: trudyn@rom.on.ca

Position: Board Member

Name: Christina Kreps

Email: ckreps@du.edu

II. Status, Activities and Accomplishments this year

1) Provide the most recent membership numbers and list any factors you think may be increasing or decreasing your Section membership:

Number of Members: 375

Factors affecting Membership:

Membership has increased in each of the last few years, which we believe is due to : 1) increased services to members, including addressing specific concerns of anthropologists in museum environments, such as the degree to which exhibitions and similar work products are recognized in promotion and tenure decisions; 2) increasing relevance of articles in the CMA journal, *Museum Anthropology*, and the good work of its editors; 3) more focused programmatic offerings and invited sessions at the annual meeting; and 4) CMA efforts to affect museum anthropology nationally, such as its involvement in Smithsonian negotiations to revise its planned exhibition of commercially salvaged objects from a 9th century Tang dynasty shipwreck, and contribution of an NSF whitepaper regarding major funding initiatives for 21st century social science research.

2) * Provide the most recent financial balances for Section budgets (and publication sponsored budgets, if applicable). Also list any factors you think are affecting your Section's finances:

Financial Balance: 72,907.79

Publications: (if applicable)

CMA publishes *Museum Anthropology*, which has total expenses of roughly \$11,100/annum. These expenses are covered by W-B royalties of \$7121, Permission fees of ca. \$300, and section subsidies from dues of \$3,357 (budgeted, actual amount less).

Factors affecting Finances:

Net assets for CMA grew this year, mainly on the strength of publication revenues and modest spending. CMA did increase its expenditures on the reception and other membership cultivation efforts this year, as well as continuing awards programs (including two student travel awards) established last year. We anticipate remaining revenue-neutral or better throughout the remaining years of the W-B contract, but feel concern regarding: 1) the long-term commitment of AAA to sectional publications; 2) the revenue implications of the expiration of the W-B agreement; and 3) uncertainty regarding the changing nature of scholarly publishing in general.

3) * List the titles of your Section's AAA meeting invited sessions, co-sponsored sessions, and any special events your Section sponsored or in which it participated. Check with your program chairs if needed: When providing session information please note if these are invited, volunteered or co-sponsored.

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: SMALL MUSEUMS, BIG QUESTIONS. COMMUNITY MUSEUMS IN COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: UNRULY THINGS: MUSEUMS AND THE CO-PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Session Type: Invited

Session: QUERYING “ART”, “TRADITION,” MUSEUMS, AND HERITAGE - PAPERS IN HONOR OF NELSON GRABURN

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: CURATING DIFFICULT KNOWLEDGE: NEW MODELS OF CULTURAL EVOCATION AND INTERVENTION

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: MATERIAL TRACES AND EFFACEMENTS: ETHNOGRAPHIES OF DEALING AND COLLECTING

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: ETHNOGRAPHIC CONCEPTUALISM: PERFORMING METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: 'NO DEAL!' INDIGENOUS ARTS AND THE POLITICS

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: ON NORTHERN ALGONQUIAN MATERIAL CULTURE

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: LIVING COLLECTIONS: SOCIAL NETWORKS OF SPACE, PLACE, AND MATERIALITY

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: MUSEUMS AND COMMUNITIES

Other Events:

In addition to the sessions listed above, CMA also reviewed or sponsored:

[MUSEUMIZING THE ANIMAL: NARRATING HUMAN ONTOLOGIES THROUGH ANIMAL EPISTEMOLOGIES](#) (volunteered)

[RE- ACTIVATING THE LEGACY: CURRENT RESEARCH ON MUSEUM COLLECTIONS](#) (volunteered)

[LEGACIES OF "TIME IMMEMORIAL" IN NATIVE NORTH AMERICA: CONTINUITY, CREATIVITY, AND EMERGENT SELF-DETERMINATION](#) (volunteered)

While none of the sessions are listed as co-sponsored this year, this was due to a glitch in communication. The session (and a reception afterward) was planned as a co-sponsored event with SVA, and under normal circumstances both CMA and SVA would have sponsored the session. In years past CMA has almost always co-sponsored one or more sessions with another section.

CMA hosts an annual reception, normally at an offsite museum, as both a cultivation event and to allow museum anthropologists attending the meetings to gain behind-the-scenes access to a peer institution. This year the reception was held at the McCord Museum, and was linked to an SVA/CMA celebration of the career of Nelson Graburn which was also marked by a sponsored double session at the annual meeting. Last year the reception was held at the New Orleans Pharmacy Museum. Each was extremely successful.

4) * Did your section request a meeting registration waiver or community engagement grant?

Requested Grant: Yes

If granted, who/what was it/they used for? (if applicable)

Native American presenter, non-anthropologist, in a AAA session on Northern Algonkian Material Culture, presenting a sidelight on the academic topics being discussed from the perspective of the Innu communities actually involved.

5) List spring meeting activities (if applicable):

n/a

6) List awards presented this year on behalf of your Section, if applicable (please provide the title of the award, date presented, and full name, affiliation, and title of the project/paper/accomplishment of the awardees):

Award Title: CMA Student Travel Award

Date: 2011-11-18 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Fiona MacDonald

Affiliation: University College, London (UCL)

Project/Paper/etc: Field, Studio, Lab: Ethnographic Terminalia Innovent

Award Title: CMA Student Travel Award

Date: 2011-11-18 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Diana Marsh

Affiliation: University of British Columbia (UBC)

Project/Paper/etc: Reassembling' the 'Social Life' of a Medicine Man at the Science Museum, London

Award Title: Michael M. Ames Award for Innovative Museum Anthropology

Date: 2011-11-18 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Alison K. Brown

Affiliation: University of Aberdeen

Project/Paper/etc: The Blackfoot Shirts Project

Award Title: Michael M. Ames Award for Innovative Museum Anthropology

Date: 2011-11-18 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Heather Richardson

Affiliation: Pitt Rivers Museum

Project/Paper/etc: The Blackfoot Shirts Project

Award Title: Michael M. Ames Award for Innovative Museum Anthropology

Date: 2011-11-18 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Laura Peers

Affiliation: Pitt Rivers Museum

Project/Paper/etc: The Blackfoot Shirts Project

7) * Mentorship efforts (at or beyond the AAA meetings) to any of the following (e.g., special activities, funding, awards, guidance/advising on professional matters, etc.):

Undergraduate and/or graduate students

CMA offers two annual travel awards to students presenting papers at the AAA annual meetings. Currently a revision of the CMA bylaws is being drafted to establish student positions on the CMA board, and in the interim bylaws allow students to occupy any regular board seat. While the nominations process is not yet complete, serious consideration is being given to having two students stand for election for one of the seats open in the upcoming election cycle (i.e., both listed candidates for an open seat would be students, ensuring increased student representation).

Two individuals were selected for 2011 CMA Student Travel Awards: Fiona McDonald, a third year PhD candidate in Visual Anthropology and Material Culture at University College London (UK); and Diana Marsh, a second year PhD student in Museum Anthropology at the University of British Columbia.

Early career scholars:

The Council for Museum Anthropology jointly awarded the 2011 Michael M. Ames Prize for Innovative Museum Anthropology to Dr. Laura Peers (curator of the Americas, Pitt Rivers Museum and reader in Material Anthropology, University of Oxford), Dr. Alison K. Brown (lecturer, department of Anthropology, University of Aberdeen), and Heather Richardson (Pitt Rivers Museum) for their collaborative “Blackfoot Shirts Project.”

Building on their joint editorship of *Museums and Source Communities* (2003), Peers and Brown worked with Pitt Rivers Museum conservator Heather Richardson to arrange for the loan of five historic hairlock shirts, housed at Pitt Rivers since 1893, to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary and the Galt Museum in Lethbridge, Alberta. There, the shirts were seen, handled, and studied by more than 500 Blackfoot youth, teachers, ceremonialists, elders, and artists from all four Blackfoot Nations: Siksika, Piikani, Kainai in Canada, and the Blackfeet of Browning, Montana, in the United States.

This project perfectly fits the Ames prize’s rigorous criteria of creativity, timeliness, depth,

and impact. As Trudy Nicks (Senior Curator, Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum) writes in her nomination letter: "It advances the literature on the role of objects in collective memory, history, meaning, identity and in the post-colonial context, in cultural healing." To ensure lasting visibility, the organizers also created a website that includes Blackfoot commentary and outlines for lesson plans and conservation approaches (see <<http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/blackfootshirts>>). The unanticipated and on-going ripple effects of this endeavor make the Blackfoot Shirts Project an excellent model of innovative museum work that could inspire future creative and generative border-crossing projects among countries, generations, museum cultures, and Indigenous cultures.

Independent scholars:

No specific activities were aimed exclusively at independent scholars, but CMA continues to emphasize the role of source communities in the co-production of knowledge, and engages scholars from outside anthropology in its programming. Many of its members hold professional positions outside academia.

8) Additional outreach efforts (at or beyond the AAA meetings) to other sections, interest groups, and scholarly societies, government agencies, public education/community engagement, and underrepresented minorities:

CMA traditionally co-sponsors sessions with other sections in order to increase communication, visibility, and the range of offerings we can add to the annual meeting program. In recent years we've worked closely with SVA in particular. CMA officers work closely with a range of source communities, and much of the current thrust of CMA activities is to break down barriers between source communities and the museum collections which were assembled from them. This is evident in the research of CMA board members and members at large, the editorial direction of *Museum Anthropology*, the character of the CMA annual awards, and the tenor of CMA columns in *Anthro News*. CMA is also closely allied with other peer professional organizations, such as the American Association of Museums, and has extensive overlap of membership with other sections within AAA, such as the Archaeology Division. As noted elsewhere CMA prepared a whitepaper for the NSF SBE planning program, which solicited input regarding major initiatives for federal funding in the social sciences.

9) Status and use of Section internal communications such as a website, list serve, or newsletter (if applicable): Please list internal communication tools you use and what they are used for:

CMA currently uses AAA to host its website for general information regarding the Council. Membership email blasts are used occasionally (we like to think judiciously) to communicate with members regarding upcoming deadlines and events, and to solicit sessions for the annual meeting. CMA also uses *Anthro News* columns to provide information to members. Development of the website and offering of new electronic resources is an important priority for the Council.

A new listserv is planned but has not yet gone "live." It will allow more general, two-way exchange of information with higher volume and less specificity and selectivity.

10) Changes in bylaws or governance structure (if applicable):

Other than some minor housekeeping corrections to the bylaws, the only substantive change is the proposed creation of an elected, voting student seat on the CMA board.

III. What Initiatives does your Section have underway or planned for the coming year: Membership, publication annual meeting, mentorship, other?

- Strengthen existing award programs through commissioning of a physical expression of the Ames Award for Innovative Museum Anthropology, probably using a Native artist for design and fabrication.
- Review membership structure and pricing; consider reducing cost of student memberships in order to increase student representation and exposure to anthropology in museum contexts.
- Continue to develop and disseminate guidelines for the treatment of exhibitions as part of university tenure & promotion reviews (Cecile Ganteaume has already agreed to assist with this effort).
- Identify & promote online list of all anthropology museums listing collections databases online; begin process of determining whether existing metadata standards (CIDOC, Dublin Core) are employed. Help nudge the community toward commonality in one or another form. This is a long-term project.
- Identify, collate and disseminate syllabi and training materials used in anthropology-derived museology/museum studies classes as resource for both AAA and anthropology in general, but also for AAM and museums in general.
- Position CMA as a leader in the publication of material culture and representation by employing technology to publish richer, media-enabled offerings in museums, material culture, visual anthropology, museum/exhibition reviews and datasets. We'd like to explore offering web-based poster-sessions prior to annual meeting, with poster time set aside for discussions and reaction rather than explanation. This would be a new model in some respects, and would require larger integration and consultation with AAA staff and program committees.
- Work with US Committee of the Blue Shield and other stakeholders to identify: 1) needs for training military personnel for protecting cultural property in time of armed conflict; and 2) museum-based resources to assist in training. Work with tribal museums to explore ways CMA can serve their needs and interests.
- Establish sustained advocacy program to funding organizations and decision-makers regarding the need to provide additional resources to support curation, conservation and care of cultural collections.
- Integrate disparate online offerings and create stronger "brand" recognition for CMA.
- Create rainy-day fund/formal reserves to ensure stability of CMA programs in lean times (form of fund will depend on possibilities allowed by applicable AAA policies and guidelines).

IV. Please tell us what your chief concerns and issues are, especially if they are not previously noted:

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Section Assembly Executive Committee (SAEC)? Please be specific.

1. Address the need for reports from sectional editors regarding publication activities. AAA needs these data to make informed choices regarding the Association's future directions in print and electronic publishing.
2. Address the coming tension between sections and the Association. The original model shared governance in ways that weakened the Association at the expense of the sections. The new model weakens the sections at the expense of the Association. Publications and any new revenue distribution models will be at the core of this tension, and we need to start addressing the issues now rather than later.
3. Address the proliferation of sections.

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board? Please be specific.

AAA is a fragile entity because of the diversity of approaches and contexts of practices comprising modern anthropology. The 38 sections of AAA represent specific areas and topics, and represent a real and continuing strength. As a Board the AAA EB must act in the best interests of the Association as a whole, but I hope it will recognize that weakening the sections at the expense of central governance is a two-edged sword, and may erode AAA's ability to attract and retain members, particularly among anthropologists who are not part of the dominant majority group(s). Already AAA sees a decreasing share of members from these groups, and an increasing membership in independent groups representing these contexts of practice or anthropological approaches. As the EB considers the future of publications, revisions to the ethics code, distribution of revenue from publishing contracts, and other Association-wide issues affecting the future of everyone--AAA and its sections alike--I hope the Board will be sensitive to and respectful of the differing needs, interests and cultures within those sections and contexts of practice in AAA, just as I'm sure each of its members is sensitive to similar differences in pursuing their own research among other culturally diverse communities.

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Staff? Please be specific.

Great job, and thank you!